

THE
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN:
OR, THE
L I F E
OF THE
COUNTESS of *****.

Written by HERSELF.

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

Translated from the FRENCH.

Recommended to the YOUTH of both Sexes, as proper to fix in their Minds just Ideas of VIRTUE and RELIGION.

*What's Female Beauty, but an Air Divine;
Tho' which the Mind's all pow'rful Graces shine.
They, like the Sun, irradiate all between:
The Body charms, because the Mind is seen.*

YOUNG.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JACOB ROBINSON in *Ludgate-street.*
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VIRIUGUS ORPHAN:

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Wm. H. H. H.

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THE VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART VII.

DON'T you remember, Madam. that it was so long before you received the second part of my history, that you began to suspect I did not intend to send it: the third was so late, that you thought you should receive no more; and tho' the fourth was more expeditious, yet you charged me with laziness; the fifth preceded your expectations; the sixth followed so close that it surprized you; and here you see the seventh. Pray, tell me what opinion this gives you of my character? Am I idle? my diligence proves the contrary. Am I diligent? my former sloth insists upon the negative. What am I then in this respect? why, what in general we all of us are; what fancy and humour render us, sometimes worthy of praise, and sometimes worthy of blame. Is not all the world the same? I have confided in the goodness of the virtuous, and from the vices of the wicked have imagined what would be their actions; but in both cases I have frequently been deceived. I have had reason to think they would shew their generosity, and they appeared mean-spirited and covetous: I have thought them covetous, and they proved generous.

Formerly you could not endure the sight of a book, and now you are ever reading: perhaps in a short time you will leave your books, and I relapse into my former indolence. However, let me go on with my history. We now are at the ill-natured manner in which my enemy interrupted Mr. de ****. To which I returned:

You are quite mistaken indeed, Madam, said I; you may make your self entirely easy, for you have no reason to be under any apprehensions. It is true, Mrs. de Valville has the goodness to be a mother to me (here I could not smother my sighs) and I am obliged, unless I would be the most ungrateful creature upon earth, to love and respect her as much as if she was the mother who brought me into life. I owe her the same dutiful submission, the same reverence, and I think sometimes even much more; for tho' I am not her child, she treats me as if I was. I am not related to her, she might therefore, without fear of censure, have left me in the distress in which she found me involved; or however, have satisfied herself with shewing a common compassion for me, and letting me know that I had some share in her esteem; but her goodness, her care, her tenderness, are inexpressible. I can neither think of them, nor look upon her without melting into tears of love and gratitude; without telling her that my heart, my life is hers; without wishing I had a thousand lives, which, if she stood in need of them, I would freely give to save hers. And I thank God I have now an opportunity of making this public declaration: it is an infinite satisfaction, the greatest I could ever experience, to be able thus to give a loose to the transports of my affection; and all that zeal and admiration with which my heart overflows. — Yes, Madam, I am only a stranger,

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stranger, an unhappy orphan, whom God, the universal parent, seemed to have abandoned to all imaginable evils. But now, tho' I should be told I was the daughter of a queen, and was invited to accept of a crown, I would refuse it, rather than be separated from you: I could not live without you. I love none with such a tender affection, as I do you, my dearest friend. You are the only tie I have on earth; you who have received me so charitably; you whose generosity leads you to love me: notwithstanding the efforts of those who would make you blush for it: tho' the world despises me.—

HERE, thro' the tears I was shedding, I took notice that several of the company turned away their heads to wipe their eyes. The minister looked downwards, and endeavoured to conceal his being touched. Valville stood as if immovable, regarding me with a passionate air, as if I took up all his thoughts: and my mother let her tears freely flow, without endeavouring to conceal them. Thou hast not said all: proceed, my dear Marianne, said she, (giving me her hand without any ceremony, which I freely kissed ;) proceed, but say no more of me, since it moves thee so much.

You told me, Sir, resumed I, that you would remove me far from Paris, if I refused to marry this young man; do so if you please: but I have but one thing to say, which ought to free you from your apprehensions of my marrying Mr. de Valville; and that is, I give you my word it will never be concluded. 'Tis true, Sir, I did not assure you of it before Mrs. de Valville arrived; but I hope you will excuse me, when I tell you that I did not think it would be generous in me to renounce Mr. de Valville, while menaces

were used to compel me to it. I thought it would be a baseness and ingratitude to shew such want of resolution, after he has had the courage to love me with so much sincerity and tenderness, in spite of the discouraging situation in which he found me; a circumstance that has only served to encrease his affection. This, Sir, was my motive. If I had promised that I would see him no more, he would have had reason to believe, that I had not the least esteem for him, since I should have refused to have been persecuted for his sake. On the contrary, my intention was, that he should know his generous heart had conquered mine; and I am not ashamed to confess it. This, perhaps, may be the last time I shall see him, and I therefore take hold of it to acquit myself of what I owe him, and to let Mrs. de Valville and him know, that what fear and menaces could not compel me to, I do now out of gratitude to them both. No, Madam; no, Mr. de Valville; you are both too dear to me; I can never be the cause of the reproaches you would suffer, nor of the shame they say you might draw upon yourselves. The world disdains, it rejects me; and as we shall never be able to correct its prejudices, we must humour them. You think it is unjust, but it does not become me to think so; I should be too much a gainer by that: I shall only say, you are generous; and I will never abuse the affection that makes you scorn its customs. The blame that would fall upon you, would cost me my life; and if I did not prevent it, I should be unworthy of your goodness. Alas! how greatly would you then think yourselves deceived! you would then reflect, that I had not the disinterested character your affection now flatters me with; this is the only way to preserve your esteem. Mr. de Climal

mal has been so kind as to leave me something to live upon; and that is sufficient for a girl, who, in quitting you, leaves all that is dear behind her, all the charms, all the sweets of life; and after this will have nothing more worthy her care, no other loss worth regretting. I will immure myself in a convent for life, where I shall see no body but my dear mamma, whom I beg not to deprive me of her company too suddenly. These, Sir, are my designs; and if you suspect my sincerity, send me far from hence according to your first intention.

A TORRENT of tears concluded my discourse: Valville, pale and dejected, seemed unable to support his trouble; his mother was going to answer me, when the minister prevented her by turning suddenly to her relations. Ladies, (said he to them with a lively air of satisfaction) what answer can be made to what we have heard? for my part, I can make none; and I declare, that I will interfere no more in it. Would you have me oppose the esteem Mrs. de Valville has for virtue, which we all ought to approve? Would you have me endeavour to strip it of its charms? you and I have no such thoughts; and therefore authority has nothing to do here. And then, turning to his lady's nurse's son, retire, Villot, said he. Madam, I return you your daughter, and all the power you have over her: you have been to her a mother, nor could she have found a better; and she is worthy of all your care and tenderness. Go, Miss, forget what is past, and let it be as if it had never been; let not your being ignorant of your birth disturb you: tho' the nobleness of your extraction is unknown, that of your mind is beyond all dispute; and were I to chuse, I should prefer the latter.

HERE he was going to withdraw, but seized with a sudden transport, I threw myself at his feet, with a rapidity more eloquent and more expressive than all I could have said: nor could I utter a word to thank him for the gracious sentiments he had expressed in my favour. He raised me immediately with an air, that shewed that this action agreeably surprized and moved him. Rise, my lovely child, said he; you owe me nothing; I only do you justice. Then addressing himself to the ladies, She will not be satisfied till she makes us all love her, added he; and I don't see how we can avoid it. Take her with you, Madam, rejoined he to my mamma; carry her back: you must take care of your son, if he loves her: for after the amiable qualities we have seen in her, I would neither answer for him nor any one else: you must, after all, do as you think proper, for it is your own business. Without doubt, said Mrs. de ****; I am very sorry we have given Mrs. de Valville this trouble to-day; I did all I could to prevent it.—Well, ladies, returned the haughty kinswoman, I think you have nothing to do now but to congratulate your cousin; pray embrace her before-hand; you'll run no risk in it, for she will soon be one of the family. As for me, I hope you will dispense with it, notwithstanding the incomparable nobleness of her heart: I am not indeed apt to be wrought upon by such romantic virtues. Adieu, my little adventurer; you are now, it seems, only a lady of quality, they say; but you won't stop here: we shall be very happy if you don't persuade them to believe by-and-by, that you are a princess. Instead of answering her I advanced towards my mother, took hold of her hand, kissed it, and bathed it with tears of joy. The ill-natured relation arose up in a rage; and,

as she was going, asked the two ladies if they would not follow her. On this they arose, more out of complaisance for her, than enmity to me. It was very visible, that they did not at all approve of her behaviour; and only withdrew for fear of disobliging her. One of them, as she was going, whispered to Mrs. de Valville, She brought us with her, said she, and would never forgive us if we staid behind her. Valville, who was now come to himself, could not look at her without laughing; the ill success of her enterprize had disarmed his resentment. Does your coach wait for you, Madam, said he, or shall we set you down. Let me alone, cried she; your satisfaction excites my pity. She then saluted Mrs. de ****, and, without casting her eyes on Mrs. de Valville, went out with the above-mentioned ladies.

SHE was no sooner gone, than the rest of the company assembled about me, and every one paid me some obliging compliment. I can't help reproaching myself, said the minister's lady to my mamma, for entering into their intrigue; I am vexed that they were able to teize me into it: we could not be more in the wrong than we were. Is it not true, ladies? Pray don't mention it any more, replied they, we are quite ashamed of it. How amiable she is! we have nothing so sweetly charming in all Paris. Nor perhaps so truly valuable, returned Mrs. de ****. I cannot tell how to express the inquietude I was in, during the whole dialogue; and I confess I never was better pleased with Mr. de ****; for what he has just said is extremely equitable. I confess, said one of the gentlemen I had seen in the antichamber, that I should have been in a great deal of pain, if we had had any other judge but Mr. de ****.

but his known justice would not suffer me to doubt a moment. For my part, I ought to beg his pardon for my fears, said Valville, who had hitherto listened with an air of inward satisfaction; at which they all smiled. It grew late, and my mamma took her leave of the minister's lady, who embraced her in the most friendly manner, as if she intended to make her forget the assistance she had given to her enemies. She then did me the honour to embrace me too, a favour I received with all possible respect. And then we retired.

SCARCE were we got into the antichamber, when we met Mrs. Catharine, who told us she was sent by the minister, to wait upon us to the last convent, to desire them to return my clothes, which they might not be willing to do if we went without her; unless Mrs. de Valville chose to defer going there till another time. I did not know the way thither; besides, we were willing to conclude this affair directly, and therefore readily consented to her offer. The woman then followed us, and stepped into the coach. She had immediately lost that familiar behaviour she had before assumed; she seemed ashamed of the difference there was between us; every one has her own little pride; we were no longer companions, and that gave her a visible confusion. My joy was too exquisite to permit me to encrease her disorder, and my triumph too sweet to suffer me to amuse myself with an ill-natured vanity: besides, I never had a heart capable of desiring to give another pain. Our conversation was very much reserved all the way, on account of her company. Something however that passed made her tell us that Mrs. de Fare was the cause of this uproar, tho' she would not consent to join with the rest of the
rela-

relations against me. She did not tell it with a design to prejudice me, but only to give herself the pleasure of being indiscreet, and revealing a thing she thought surprizing.

WE soon arrived at the convent, when I slept down with the servant. There is no occasion for me to appear, said my mamma; and I think it sufficient for this young woman to go alone to demand your clothes, without taking notice that we are here. Permit me to go, Madam, said I; the kindness the abbess has expressed for me, requires that I should return her my thanks, which cannot be dispensed with, without the appearance of ingratitude. You are in the right, child; I did not know that, returned she; go, but make haste; tell her that I wait for you, and that I am so fatigued, that I cannot possibly come down; be as speedy as you can; you may come to see her another time. Not to be tedious, I entered the convent, and had my box returned to me. The nuns I had seen before, came to congratulate me on the success of my adventure. The abbess gave me fresh testimonies of the most sincere affection; she wished I would pass the rest of the day with her; but I could not comply with her request. My mamma, said I, is at the gate of your convent in her coach; she would have seen you if she had not been indisposed; she desires to be excused; and I am obliged to leave you.——What! that tender mother whom I esteem so much, cried she; is she here? how glad should I be to see her! Go, Miss, and endeavour to persuade her to come in for a moment; if I could go out, I would wait upon her myself; but if it is too late, tell her that I intreat her to do me the honour to come another time with you. Here she dismissed me, a servant

carried my box of clothes to the coach, and then we parted.—My mamma told me I should dine with her, and not return to the other convent till the evening. You must be a little longer in that house, said she, if it be only in regard to what has happened, and the uneasiness I have expressed there on your account. Meanwhile the coach was going on, and presently stopt in the court of Mrs. de Valville's house, when she dismissed Mrs. de ****'s servant, walked in, and went up stairs.

THE house-keeper, who had pulled off my stocking after my fall in returning from church, was no longer in the family; and the valet that had followed me in the hackney-coach to Mrs. du Tour's, and brought me letters from Valville to the convent, I found was sick; so none of the servants knew who I was. The reason why I mention this, is, while I was going up stairs with my mother, I had a reflection which exceedingly damped my joy; methought I was going to meet the above-mentioned house-keeper, and some of the footmen, who would infallibly know me again. Ha! the girl that was brought here who had hurt her foot, thought I, they would say, as soon as they saw me; the little linen-drafter that we took for a lady, who was carried to Mrs. du Tour's! This reflection mortified me; and I was afraid Valville too would be a little ashamed of me, tho' his love might make him regardless of their censure; but happily we were not exposed to this disagreeable scene; and I was at leisure to taste the pleasure of being with my mother, with as high a satisfaction as if I had been in my own house. Now my dear, said she, let me embrace thee without restraint; what a happy turn has our affairs taken! They suspect, they
foresee

foresee our designs, but don't disapprove them. The prime minister has dispensed with your promise in returning you to me; and, thank heaven, they will no longer be surprized at any thing that passes. Thou hast said, my dear, the tenderest things of me this morning; but indeed, the uneasiness I have suffered on thy account makes me deserve them. Thou hast had a great deal of affliction too; is it not true? Didst thou reflect on what I should suffer? What were thy thoughts of thy mamma?

SHE had seated herself in an easy chair, and I sat by her, before she addressed me in this manner; when I gave myself over to a sudden transport of gratitude. I threw myself at her feet, kissed her hand, and lifted up my eyes, swimming with tenderness and gratitude. O madam, said I, Mr. de Valville is very dear to me; I have publickly acknowledged it; but that can't prevent my telling you, that you were a thousand times more in my thoughts than he. It was my mamma that engrossed my soul, it was her affection; her goodness——What will she do? What will she not do? Was all the language of my soul. I could not tell whether you would succeed in extricating me from my difficulties; but my most earnest wishes were, that you might be afflicted at the thought of never seeing me more: I desired a hundred times more your tenderness than my own deliverance; and would rather have endured all than have been abandoned by you. I was full of these thoughts, so extremely agitated by them, that I could not help having some inquietude, which I now reproach my self with; but which lasted only for a moment. I thought of Mr. de Valville too; and found that I could not bear his forsaking me, without being filled with an afflic-

tion too great to be expressed. But your affection, Madam, was my principal concern. Your heart was still more necessary for the repose of mine, than his seemed to be. How kind has been your behaviour! how many obligations have you conferred upon me! and how sweet is the reflection of being dear to those we love!

MRS. de Valville listened to me, with a smile of complacency. Arise, my dear, said she at last; you make me forget that you deserve to be blamed for your imprudence yesterday morning. I wonder you should let yourself be carried away by a woman intirely unknown to you, without a note from me, and in a coach too which was not mine. Where was your wits not to take notice of all this, especially after the suspicious visit you had received the day before, from the skeleton you so well described? Did not her menaces intimate some design against you? and should not they have given you some distrust? you are a little giddy-brained creature: And pray, while you stay in the convent, remember I would not have you leave it without that woman, who is just gone out of the room (she spoke of her chambermaid) or a letter from me, when I don't go for you my self; do you mind?

SHE had no sooner said this, than the dinner was brought in. Valville and I eat very little: my mamma took notice of it, and with a smile said, Your joy I fancy takes away your stomachs. Yes, Madam, returned Valville, in the same agreeable tone; we can't give up our minds to many things at once. When dinner was over, Mrs. de Valville went into her own room, and we followed her. She then retired into a small closet, and called me; I went to her. Give me thy hand, said she to me; let us see if this ring will

will fit you: it was set with a very large and beautiful brilliant. I see a picture, returned I, while she was trying it on, that I should value more than all the rings and jewels in the universe. Let us make an exchange, Madam, added I; give me the picture, and I will return you the ring. Have patience, child, replied she, it shall be placed in your room, when you take possession of it, and that will be very soon. Where do you put your money, Marianne, she rejoined? I think you have never a purse. Here is one neatly wrought, said she, opening a draw, and taking it out, make use of this. I thank you, Madam, returned I: but where must I put all the love, the respect, the gratitude I have for you? methinks I have more than can be contained in the narrow limits of my heart. At this she smiled. Valville, who stood at the closet door, was almost in raptures at hearing us talk to each other with this sweet and easy familiarity. Do you know, Madam, what we must do, said he; let us put your daughter as soon as possible in possession of the room where you design to hang your picture; she will be more able to support the love she has for you, by being at hand to pour it when she pleases into your bosom. That we are going to talk of presently, returned Mrs. de Valville. Come, I will shew her the apartment which was mine while your father lived.

WE then went into a large antichamber, which I had seen before, in which there was a door opposite to that of the room we left, which opened into an apartment more spacious and better furnished than Mrs. de Valville's; and which, as well as hers, had the prospect of a fine garden. Well, my dear, said she smiling, how do you like this room? won't your time pass very sluggishly

gishly here, and make you regret your dear convent? Transported with the most ravishing joy, I burst into tears, and casting myself into her arms, O dear Madam, returned I in an affectionate tone, what charms have you provided for me here! how delightful will it be to be always so near you! I had scarce finished these words, when the * porter's whistle informed us we were going to be troubled with company. Mrs. de Valville was concerned at our being interrupted: she went to her apartment, and I followed her. Two ladies presently entered the room, who were entirely unknown to me, as I was to them; they perhaps thought me a relation of the family; and came to pay us one of those indifferent visits, which consists in trifling away an idle hour, exchanging a few troublesome compliments, and then part with a perfect indifference to each other. I shall only observe that one of these two ladies talked very little, and had hardly any share in the conversation; she bridled her head, threw herself into a variety of different attitudes, and seemed wholly taken up with the charms of her dear incomparable person. It is true, she would have been very agreeable, if she had taken less pains to shew that she was so; but her vanity spoiled all, and stripped her of every natural beauty. There are many like her, who would appear extremely amiable, if they could but forget a little that they are so. Every action, every gesture in this person, were only designed to make her taken notice of, and to fill her beholders with admiration. This was the height of her ambition, and she seemed to live for nothing else. I believe she

* It is a custom in France, when persons of quality receive a visit, for the porter at the door to whistle to give the servants notice of it.

she thought me pretty agreeable, because she only regarded me with a side glance, full of an affected negligence; and hardly seemed to take notice that I was there, as if she would have it thought that she saw nothing in me, but what was common and below her regard. But one thing, however, betrayed her; her eyes were incessantly fixed on Valville, to observe which of the two he took most notice of, she or I; and shewed that she feared he would give me the preference.

THE other lady was a good deal older, and seemed of a very grave, and yet very trifling disposition: she spoke with the utmost seriousness and dignity, of a coach that was making for her; of an entertainment she had given; of a visit she made; of a story she had from a certain marchioness; and then what an ingenious repartee she made the other day to Mrs. What-do-you-call-her, who, because she is rich, frequently forgets herself, and presumes not to make a proper difference between herself, and women of a certain distinction. These and a thousand other subjects, equally trifling and vain, were the topics of her conversation; during which we had several other visits no less tedious and impertinent: so that it was late before we could disengage ourselves from them, and it grew time for me to be carried back to the convent. My mamma hastened my going, because she was weary, and wanted to take some repose. We soon arrived at the convent, where we saw the abbess in her parlour; and my mother, in a few words, told her the conclusion of my adventure; and after promising to come to see me again the next day, or the day after, she retired.

16. *The Virtuous Orphan.*

ABOUT twelve o'clock, the second day, Mrs. de Valville came to fetch me, according to her promise. I dined with her and Valville, and our marriage was the subject of the conversation. At the same time they told me, that Valville was endeavouring to get a considerable post, which he would soon be invested with; that it would not be above three weeks at farthest before he obtained it, and that it was resolved we should be married as soon as that affair should be concluded. Nothing could be more positive. Valville discovered a mind full of joy; and my satisfaction was so excessive, that it took away my speech, and I could only express it by the grateful looks I cast at my mamma. This is not all, said she, I intend to set out this evening, for eight or ten days to my country seat, where I shall rest myself from the fatigues I have undergone since my brother's death; and I design to take you along with me, whilst my son goes to pass some time at Versailles, where his affairs call him. What ten or twelve days with you at once! how delightful is the thought! returned I; but pray, Madam, don't change your mind. Never fear it, child, said she, and immediately went into her closet to write to the abbess, to let her know that she would take me with her into the country: the letter was sent directly, and we set out two hours after.

OUR journey was not very long, her seat being only three leagues from Paris. Valville stole away from Versailles two or three times to see us there. He did not take possession of his post so soon as he imagined. Several unforeseen difficulties drew out this affair to a considerable length; tho' we expected it would be concluded every day. In short, we returned from the country; and my
mamma

mamma placed me again in the convent, where she did not think I should stay above a week. However a month passed away, in which time, I went sometimes to dine with her, and sometimes with Mrs. Dorfin. During this interval Valville appeared as tender and passionate as ever, but more gay than usual ; in a word, his love seemed not to decrease, tho' he had more patience under the incidents that prolonged the conclusion of his affairs. The last time she carried me to my convent, Valville desired my mamma to let him attend us : His company had that day been very charming : methought he had never before loved me so much ; nor expressed it in a more graceful, gallant and lively manner : but so much the worse ; his wit and gallantry, were ill omens of my approaching uneasiness : his love probably was then less serious and violent ; and he told me agreeable things, only to disguise the sentiments of his heart, which began to lose its tenderness. However, he desired to attend us. Mrs. de Valville at first refused it ; but afterwards consented. Well, said she, I grant you leave, on condition that you stay in the coach, and don't shew your self, while I step in for a moment to speak to the abbess. From this piece of complaisance sprang the most poignant grief I think I had ever before experienced.

A LADY of great distinction had brought her daughter the evening before to our convent ; whom she intended to place there as a boarder, till she returned from a voyage she was going to make to England, to take possession of an estate that had fallen to her by the death of her mother. This lady's husband died in France not long before ; he was an English lord, whose zeal for his king had induced him, like many others, to leave his country. His widow,

dow, whose jointure had been her only resource, was going to sell it, together with her new estate, with a design to return to France, where she chose to reside. She had before made an agreement with the abbess, that her daughter should enter into the convent, and had just brought her when we arrived; so that we found her coach in the court. We had but just stepped out of ours, when we saw those two ladies coming down from the parlour; where they had had a short conversation with the abbess. They had already opened the door to receive the young lady; when casting her eyes into the convent, and then looking back on her mother, who was all in tears, she suddenly fainted away between her arms. The mother, almost as weak as the daughter, would have been unable to prevent her falling down the stairs they were going to descend, if a footman who belonged to her had not made haste to support them both. This accident, of which Mrs. de Valville and I were spectators, made us cry out and run to assist the footman, who had much ado to support them, and prevent their both falling down stairs together. Help, ladies, quick! I entreat you; I believe my daughter is dying, cried the mother, all in tears, with the tone of a person in distress. The nuns, who were at the door of the convent, called a servant, who came running and opened the door of a little room where she lay, and which happily was near the staircase of the parlour. Here they endeavoured to carry the young lady; we entered it with her mother, leaning upon Mrs. de Valville, for she was pretty near in the same condition with her daughter.

VALVILLE, touched at this moving spectacle, part of which he had seen from the coach, forgot that he ought not to have appeared; and without allowing

allowing himself time for reflection, ran into this little room. They had laid the young lady on the servant's bed, and she and I were unlacing her to facilitate her respiration, when he came in. Her head reclined upon a pillow, one of her arms hung out of the bed, and the other was extended on her side; and both, I must confess, were of an admirable form. Her eyes, tho' closed, had a particular charm; and I never saw any thing so moving as her countenance, on which death was painted: but it was an image only affecting, not at all frightful. At this sight one would rather have chose to say that she does not live, than that she is dead. I am at a loss how to give you an idea of the impression she made upon me, any other way than by desiring you to distinguish these two expressions, which tho' at first they appear to signify the same thing, have nevertheless a very different signification: she seemed then, I say, to be deprived of life, without having the deformity of death. In short, with that beautiful face thus reclined, with those delicate features, whose fading charms it was impossible not to lament; and which tho' we imagine them to be gone, are far from being so, since they take a nearer way to soften the heart, and inspire with tender pity: with those beautiful eyes gracefully closed, there can't be imagined an object more interesting, nor a situation more proper to affect the soul.

VALVILLE was behind us, and had his eyes fixed upon her; I looked at him several times without his perceiving it: she took up all his thoughts. I was a little surprized to see it, but went no farther, and inferred nothing from it. Mrs. de Valville felt in her pocket for a smelling-bottle, which contained a spirit that was esteemed

of

of the greatest efficacy in cases like this, but she had left it at home. Valville, who had one of them, suddenly approached, and made way through us with precipitation, and putting one knee to the ground, tried to make her snuff up some of the spirit, and poured some into her mouth. This, added to our endeavours, brought her to herself, and made her half open her eyes, which she cast with a languid glance upon Valville; when he cried, in a tone which I thought as tender and affectionate as it was singular, Come, Miss, take some more, snuff it up again. And then, with a gesture that was doubtless involuntary, took one of her hands, which he pressed between his; but I immediately took it from him, without knowing why. Softly, Sir, said I; we should not disturb her too much. He did not seem to hear me: yet all this appeared on both sides only as the effect of that embarrassment our uneasiness and eager desire of assisting her occasioned. He was going to apply his smelling bottle again to her nose, when she sighed, opened her eyes quite, lifted up the hand I held in mine, and let it fall upon Valville's arm, who took hold of it, and still continued on his knee before her. Lord! cried she, where am I? Valville held her hand still, I thought he pressed it, and did not seem to think of rising. The lady at last recovered her spirits, looked stedfastly upon Valville, and gently drew away her hand, tho' without taking her eyes from him; and as by the bottle he held in his hand, she guessed that he had contributed to her recovery, I am very much obliged to you, Sir, said she; Where is my mamma? is she here still?

THAT lady was at her bed's-head in a chair, in which they had placed her, and had hitherto been only able to sigh and weep. I am here, daughter,

ter, replied she; O my dear Varthon, how you have frightened me! here are ladies to whom you are very much obliged, as well as to this gentleman. Valville still continued in the same posture. I repeat it to you, because I began to be uneasy at it. The young lady returned perfectly to herself, looked around her upon all the company, but fixed her eyes again upon him; and then perceiving the disorder she was in, and that she was unlaced, appeared confused and out of countenance, and put her hand upon her stays. Won't you arise, Sir, said I to Valville, all is over; the young lady has no longer any need of your assistance. That is true, returned he with some disorder, and without ceasing to look at her. I would fain get up, said she, leaning upon her mother, who helped her as well as she could. I was going to give her my hand, when Valville prevented me, and offered her his, with an eager precipitation.

So much earnestness and assiduity on his side, did not at all please me; but I could give no reason why I disapproved of it. And the vexation I was under made me act thus without knowing what I did. To all appearance Valville behaved as innocently as my self. However, I concluded something extraordinary must have passed in his mind; for you have seen the rude manner in which I spoke to him two or three times without his taking notice of it: but he was not so surprized at it, as he would have been at another time: or else he bore it as one who was conscious that he deserved it, and that I only did him justice. But to proceed:

THE nuns were still waiting till the lady should be ready to go into the convent. She thanked Mrs. de Valville and I with a very good grace and

a modest air, for the service we had rendered her. But I imagined that she seemed a little more embarrassed in the compliments she paid Mr. de Valville, and cast down her eyes when she spoke to him. Come, Madam, added she to her mother; to-morrow is the day of your departure, you have no time to lose, and I must enter the convent. On this they embraced, not without shedding many tears. I suppress the polite compliments that passed between Mrs. de Valville, and the English lady. This last related in a few words the reasons which obliged her to leave her daughter in the convent. My dear, said my mamma, seeing them embrace for the last time; since you will have the honour of having this young lady's company, endeavour to gain her friendship, and forget nothing that may contribute to comfort her. This is extremely kind, said the English lady; it encourages me, to take the liberty, to recommend her to you. To which Mrs. Valville replied, that she begged leave to take her daughter to her house when she should come for me, which was accepted by the other with all imaginable tokens of gratitude. Valville said not a word to all this. I observed his eyes oftner fixed upon the young lady than upon me; which tho' it did not please me, I attributed only to the impulse of curiosity. How was it possible to suspect him, who had loved me so tenderly, and had the same day given me such delightful proofs of his passion; who was so dear to me; whom I had often told so, and who seemed charmed at being sure of it? Sure did I say? perhaps he was too much so. Some minds filled with a false and unmanly levity, relax in their tenderness, as soon as they know they have gained our's. The desire of pleasing is attended with infinite charms, and prompts them to a behaviour that is accompanied

nied with a real satisfaction ; but as soon as they have found the way to our hearts, they are unemployed, and they neglect the person they think they have conquered.

HOWEVER, the young lady in return to the affection Mrs. de Valville recommended me to have for her, came very gracefully to me, threw her arms about my neck, and asked my friendship. This action, which was performed in the most frank and amiable manner, exceedingly moved me. I should not perhaps, have behaved thus to her ; tho' she did not appear unworthy of my affection ; but my heart did not speak for her ; or, to talk more intelligibly, I perceived a fund of coldness and indifference there, which I should have found some difficulty to overcome, tho' it could not withstand her caresses. I returned them with all the sensibility I was capable of ; and interested myself sincerely in her concerns. She at last tore herself from the embraces of her mother, and retired into the convent ; when I called to let her know that I would be with her as soon as we had seen the abbess, with whom Mrs. de Valville desired to have a short conversation.

HER mother slept into the coach, bathed in tears ; and the next day set out for England. Mrs. de Valville went for a moment to speak to the abbess, saw me enter into the convent, and then rejoined Valville, who had placed himself in the coach, where he waited for her. He left us just as we were going into the parlour, when I thought he did not seem less tender than usual. There was only one thing wanting, and that was, he forgot to ask his mother when he should see me again ; and this omission I recollected about a quarter of an hour after I had been in the convent. But our minds had been disconcerted, the young lady's

lady's accident had confused our ideas, and engrossed all our thoughts. Besides, had not my mother said that she would return the next day, or the day after? and was not that sufficient? Thus I excused him? and blamed myself for being so foolish as to remark such a trifling instance of forgetfulness.

I WAS received by the abbess, the nuns of my acquaintance, and the boarders in the most obliging manner: I have already told you they loved me, and that was very true; and especially the nun who had so agreeably vindicated me, and mortified the pride of the haughty boarder I have mentioned. After I had thanked them for the joy they expressed at my return, I ran to my new companion, whom I found in a deep melancholy, leaning upon a table in a thoughtful posture; she arose as soon as she perceived me, and came forward to embrace me, with all the marks of an extreme pleasure. It would have been difficult not to love her: her behaviour was simple, engaging and tender, and indeed she had a heart in every respect like her manners. This is an eulogium which I cannot refuse her, in spite of all the uneasiness she cost me. I soon conceived the most tender inclination for her, and her's for me, she said, began as soon as she saw me; when she could receive no other consolation but what sprang from the thought of having me for her companion. Promise me that you will love me, and that we shall be inseparable, added she, squeezing my hand, with a tone and look whose sweetness penetrated my soul and constrained my belief; so that we tied the strictest knot of friendship, and our interests became inseparable. She was like a foreigner in a strange country, tho' she was born in France, since she was separated from all her friends. Her father was dead,

dead, her mother gone to England, and possibly might die there, and this be an eternal adieu; nay, the next day might let her know she was an orphan. I was one: but tho' my misfortunes far exceeded those she had reason to apprehend, yet she was in danger of experiencing some part of them, and of being in a condition nearly resembling mine. This reflection attached me more closely to her; and I seemed to find in her a companion more emphatically so than any other. She poured her grief into my bosom; we softened each other; and in that effusion of tender and generous sentiments, to which our hearts abandoned themselves, she entertained me with the misfortunes of her family; and I, in return, related mine; but I did it to my own advantage; not indeed out of vanity, it was only the pure effect of the disposition of my mind. My story became interesting; I expressed myself in a language sublime and pathetic; I spoke like a victim of fortune, or the heroine of a romance; who, tho' she may say nothing but what is true, adorns that truth with every thing that can render it moving; thus I appeared like a noble unfortunate. In a word, I deceived her in nothing; nor was I capable of it, but only represented things in words suited to the disposition of my mind, which was tender and elevated by a croud of affecting ideas. The agreeable Miss Varthon listened to me with concern, she sighed with me, and mingled her tears with mine.

I GAVE her the history of my infancy, the character of my dear friends the vicar and his sister, with her arrival at Paris, and treated their adventure with the same dignity as my own. Then I represented the situation I was in after her death, in the most melting language: I mentioned

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father St. Vincent; but I omitted Mr. de Climal's name; my respect and tenderness for his memory prevented me, tho' I told the injury he had done me, his repentance, and the reparation he had made me: even Mrs. du Tour, with whom he placed me; and Mrs. de Valville, to whom I gave no other name than that of a lady I had met with, were not forgotten. I did not omit my fall in coming from church, nor the amiable young gentleman of a noble family, to whose house I had been carried; and should perhaps in the sequel of my history have informed her that this was the same who had assisted her; that the lady she had just seen was his mother; and that I was upon the point of marrying him, had we not been interrupted by a lay-sister, who entered the room to tell us that supper was on the table, which made me break off at Mrs. de Valville's entering the church. So that this young lady could apply nothing that I had said to any of the persons she had seen with me.

WE then went to supper. Miss Varthon, during this repast, complained of a violent pain in her head, which encreasing, obliged her to rise from table, and to return into her room, whither I followed her; but as she had need of repose, after an embrace, I retired, without having any of the incidents which attended her fainting in my thoughts.

I AROSE next morning earlier than ordinary, in order to wait upon her. When I found they were going to bleed her: alarmed at this sight, which I thought a presage of an approaching fit of illness, I burst into tears; she squeezed my hand, and endeavoured to remove my fears. 'Tis nothing at all, my dear friend, said she; 'tis only a slight indisposition proceeding from my mind's being too much agitated yesterday, which has caused

caused a little fever ; that is all. She was in the right: the bleeding calmed her disorder ; and the next day she found herself better. However, my appearing so alarmed at this little indisposition served as a proof of my affection for her, and encreased hers for me, which the condition I fell into my self, put to a harder trial.

SHE was but just up the next day, when I went into her room, to fetch my work which lay upon her table ; but I was seized with such a dizziness as made me call for help. There was none in the room but herself, and the nun my friend. They both immediately hastened to my relief. My dizziness went off and I sat down ; but it returned from time to time. I then found a difficulty of breathing, then a heaviness upon my senses ; and at last an almost total privation of them. The nun felt my pulse, and appeared uneasy ; but said nothing that might alarm me : she proposed I should be put to bed ; and Miss Varthorn and she carried me into my room. I would fain have resisted my disorder, and have persuaded myself that nothing ail'd me ; but I could hold out no longer. They put me to bed, and I desired them to leave me.

THEY had scarce left the room when a letter was brought me from Mrs. de Valville ; it contained only two lines, Which were as follow.

“ I HAVE not been able to see you these two days ; don't be uneasy, my dear, to-morrow about noon, I will come and take you with me.”

Is there no other note, sister, said I, to the nun who brought it ? I asked this, because I imagined Valville might have wrote me a letter, since he

had so good an opportunity for sending it. No, returned she, this is all the maid received of the footman, who waits for an answer; have you any thing to say to him, Miss? Yes, pray reach me a pen and ink, said I; and as ill as I was I made the following reply:

“ I RETURN you a thousand thanks, dear mamma, for your kindness in letting me hear from you. I find my self a little indisposed, and am just put to bed; but I hope this disorder will be of no ill consequence, and that to-morrow I shall be ready for you. Accept of my humble duty.”

I COULD not possibly have wrote any more; and two hours after I had a high fever, and was slight-headed; when it soon increased to such a degree, that my life was despaired of. I grew quite raving, and knew neither Miss Varthon, my friend the nun, nor scarcely my mamma, who was permitted to see me. I remained in pretty near the same condition for four days together, during which time I neither knew where I was, nor who spoke to me; and had even been let blood without being sensible of it. The fifth day the fever abated; I came to myself; and the first sign I gave of it was, that seeing Mrs. de Valville at my bed's head, I cried out, Ah! mamma! She was then reaching out her arm towards me, and was going to embrace me: I drew my hand out of bed to seize hers, put it to my mouth, and for a long time held it there as if it had been glewed to my lips. I saw Miss Varthon and some nuns about my bed, and observed that the former seemed overwhelmed with sadness. I have been very ill, said I, in a low and faint voice; and, without

without doubt have given you all a great deal of trouble. Yes, daughter, replied Mrs. de Valville; there is no body here that have not given you proofs of their goodness. But, thank God, you are now out of danger. Miss Varthon came near, and pressed my hand between hers, with an air of the sincerest friendship, and said some tender things to me, which I only answered with a look which shewed my gratitude. Two days after I was entirely out of danger, my fever had quite left me, but my weakness lasted a great while. Mrs. de Valville, who had been only permitted to see me on account of the great danger I had been in; appeared no more when that was over.

BUT I had like to have forgot one thing, and that is, that the next day after I began to recover, I reflected that I might probably have a relapse, which might be fatal to me. I thought too on the deed of gift Mr. de Climal had left me: To whom will it belong, said I? it will probably be lost to the family; and justice, as well as gratitude, demand that I should restore it to them. While these thoughts employed my mind, there was no body in the room with me but a lay-sister: Miss Varthon had just left me; the nuns were in the choir, and I found myself at liberty. Sister, said I, my life a few days ago was despaired of, my fever is now indeed abated, but we can't be sure that it will not return with the same or even a greater violence. However, I desire you would raise me up a little, and give me pen, ink and paper, that I may write a line or two. Pray, Miss, consider a little, returned she; why do you talk so: you seem to be inclined to make your will; you ought not to indulge such thoughts, but rather to thank God for your recovery. — Pray, sister,

sister, don't refuse me; I shall have done in an instant. At last she gave them me, and I wrote as follows:

" I GIVE to Mrs. de Valville, to whom I am
 " indebted for all I have, the deed of gift which
 " Mr. de Climal, her brother, lately deceased, had
 " the charity to leave me. I return also to the
 " same lady, every thing I am possessed of, to dis-
 " pose of as she pleases.

MARIANNE."

I PUT this paper under my pillow, with an intention to give it into my mamma's hands the next time she came, and it had not been wrote above a quarter of an hour before she entered the room. Well, daughter, how do you do? said she, feeling my pulse:——I think you are better than you were yesterday: come, I hope you are in a fair way to do well; you only want to recover your strength. I then took the paper and slipped it into her hand. What dost thou give me here? cried she; let us see. She opened and read it; but could not help laughing. What a mad thing thou art, child! said she; thou makest me thy executrix, and art in better health than myself; she had some reason for saying so, for she was very much altered. Come, child, to all appearance you will have no occasion to make your will this great while; it will be time enough to do that long after I have left this life, added she, tearing the paper, and throwing it into the chimney; keep what you have for my grand-children; I hope thou will have no other heirs.——Why, mamma, do you talk of leaving me? I had rather die now, than live to survive you.——

Hold

Hold your tongue, returned she. Is it not natural to suppose I should go before you? is it not according to the course of nature that I should do so? The extravagance of your paper makes me mention it. Come, let us think of living, and do you make haste to recover, lest Valville should fall sick too. Such a long absence I am sure must be insupportable to him. We were talking thus when Miss Varthon and the physician entered. The latter thought me quite out of danger, tho' I was very weak; so that my mother came no more, and was satisfied with sending to know how I did.

Mrs. de Valville had always, during her visits, caressed Miss Varthon in the most friendly and obliging manner, and it was agreed, that as soon as I was fit to go abroad, we should go together to dine with her.

THE next day when Miss Varthon was in my room, she was told a person from Mrs. de Valville desired to speak with her. I fancy it is about you, said she, as she left me to go to the parlour; nor did I doubt that I was really the subject of the message. You must observe that I had not resumed the sequel of my adventures since the day I had told her part of them, and that she was entirely ignorant of my love to Valville, and my being designed for his wife. She was indisposed the first day after she entered the convent. My illness had seized me two days after, and it had therefore been impossible for me to give her the continuation of my story.

So, Miss, said she, as she entered my room with an air of gaiety, you did not tell me that the agreeable young gentleman who joined with you in recovering me from my fit was Mrs. de Valville's son. Did you know that it was he who waited for

me in the parlour; Who? Mr. de Valville! returned I, with some surprize; pray, what did he want with you? you have been a great while together. About a quarter of an hour, returned she. He told me he came from his mother to know how you did. He was commissioned to give her compliments to me, and has been pleased to pay me a polite visit. He was in the right, returned I, in a thoughtful and reserved air; has not he given you a letter for me? did not Mrs. de Valville write to me? No, said she, there is no letter at all.

HERE some of the boarders, who were my friends, entered, and obliged us to change the conversation. I was surprized that Valville, who in less interesting circumstances had embraced every opportunity of writing to me, and had so often added a few lines to my mother's letters, did not on this occasion give me the same marks of his regard. In the height of my disorder, said I to myself, his letters might have been unseasonable; but after I have been thought to be on the brink of death, he ought surely to congratulate my returning to life, and join with me in thanking heaven for my recovery; but he neglects it, and gives me not the least tokens of his joy. If he thinks it improper, in the languid state I am in at present, to send me a separate letter, he might desire his mother to write me one, to give him an opportunity to add some lines to it by his own hand——but he thinks of nothing. This negligence disturbs me. It is not behaving like himself. What is become of my dear Valville? continued I; surely, this is no longer his heart, which has hitherto been so soft, so passionate and tender. In short, his behaviour sincerely grieved me,

me, and I could not help being offended at it.

I HAVE refused till to-day, said Miss Varthon to me, while our companions were talking to each other, to go and dine with a lady who is an intimate friend of my mother's. You are too weak to go with me, and I am not willing to leave you. But this morning before I entered your room, I sent her word by a footman that came from her, that I would wait upon her to-morrow. However, added she, if you wish me to stay with you, I will send to excuse myself. Come, shall I stay? I assure you I had rather be with you. No, returned I, taking hold of her hand in an affectionate manner; pray go, you must comply with the desire she has of seeing you. Only be so kind as to return half an hour sooner than otherwise you would do, and I shall be very well satisfied. But I should not be so, returned she; you must give me leave to shorten the visit a little more. I don't care to be uneasy so long together as you would have me.

LET us pass then to the next day. Miss Varthon went to her mother's friend, whose coach came to fetch her so very early, that she was quite out of humour at being obliged to leave me so soon. However she returned much later than I expected: I have not been able to leave them, said she, they kept me in spite of myself. And nothing could be more probable. Some days after she went thither again, and repeated her visits very often. She could not avoid it, she said, unless she would break with the lady; and I did not at all doubt it: but methought she always returned with a look more thoughtful and absent than ordinary. I told her my opinion; but she said I was mistaken, and I took no more notice of it. I then began to be

able to leave my bed, tho' I was still very weak. My benefactress sent every day to the convent to enquire after my health; she even wrote to me once or twice; but I did not receive a line from Valville. My son, said she, is very impatient to see you again; he is disturbed at your being so long on the recovery; he intended to have added some lines to this note; I have waited for him to do it; but he is not returned home yet, and must defer giving himself that satisfaction till another time. This was all the news I could hear of him. I was so shocked and so angry at it, that in the replies I returned to my mamma I ceased making any mention of him. In my last, I told her I had strength enough to carry me to the parlour, if she would be so good as to come and see me the next day. My only illness now is, that I don't see my dear mamma, added I, make haste then, Madam, I entreat you, to compleat my recovery. I did not at all doubt of her coming, which she did not fail to do; but we neither of us foresaw the grief and extreme trouble in which she found me the next day.

THAT evening Miss Varthon and I were alone and took a turn or two in my room: You fancied some days ago, that I seemed a little thoughtful, said she, and I think that to-day you seem very much so. You have something in your mind that disturbs you, and I am much deceived if you had not just been crying yesterday morning before I entered your room. I desire to know, my dear companion, what it is that troubles you. In the situation I am in, I can be of no service to you: but your uneasiness disturbs me, and makes me fear some ill consequence from it: remember that you have been very ill, and that to give yourself up to melancholy, is not the way to recover
your

your health. Our friendship requires that I should say this, but I will go no farther. Dear Miss, said I, I assure you I have no intention to hide my uneasiness from you : my heart has no secret which it would conceal from my friend. I have not long been convinced that I have had sufficient cause to be disturbed ; and I would not have this evening pass without trusting you with it : I can't refuse myself this consolation. Yes, my dear, resumed I, after a short pause, and fetching a deep sigh ; I have indeed reason for being troubled. I have already related to you the greatest part of my history : your illness prevented my giving you the sequel, and here it is in a few words. Mrs. de Valville is that lady, whom, if you remember, I told you I met in the convent : you have been witness of her behaviour towards me : every body would take her for my mother ; and from the first moment she saw me, she has constantly treated me in the same manner. But this is not all, that Mr. de Valville that came the other day to see you ——— How ! Mr. de Valville ! is he against you ? said she, interrupting me ; is he displeased with his mother's friendship for you ? No, pray hear me, said I, that is not the case. Mr. de Valville is the same young gentleman, I have also told you of, to whose house I was carried after my fall, and who from that moment conceived a most violent passion for me ; a passion so tender that I cannot doubt of its being real. Mrs. de Valville knows of our mutual affection ; knows that he would marry me, and notwithstanding my misfortunes has herself consented to it ; but for some reasons it has been retarded, and perhaps it will never now be concluded. At least Valville's conduct makes me despair of it. Miss Varthon

interrupted me no more: she listened with a pensive air, cast down her eyes, and did not even look at me. You know from what dangers I have escaped, continued I, I have but just been saved from death. Before my illness his mother hardly ever wrote the least note to me, but he sent one with it, or added a few lines to her's. And yet this same man, whom I have been accustomed to see so tender, so affectionate; he who had so much reason to apprehend my death, and who ought to have been alarmed at the state I was in; he whom I could scarce believe able to support his fears on my account, and who ought to be transported with joy at seeing me out of danger; can you believe it, Miss, has not let me hear from him, has not writ me a single word; he that has loved me so tenderly, not one short note? Is this natural? What would he have me think of it? and what would you think if you were in my place? Here I paused for a moment and stood still, Miss Varthon continued silent too; but she always left me a little behind her, continued mute, and avoided turning her head towards me. Not one letter, resumed I, he who had been so prodigal of them on less important occasions. Once more I say, can you think it possible? Have I lost his heart instead of that life which I had rather have parted with? Oh how am I troubled! But, tell me, Miss, a thought arises suddenly in my mind. May not he be sick? May not Mrs. de Valville, who knows that I love him, hide it from me? she has a sincere affection for me, and may be afraid of afflicting me: and have not you had the same kindness for me? did not you pretend a visit from Mr. de Valville only to hinder my suspecting the truth? for it appears impossible to me that he
should

should be guilty of such negligence; and I assure you, I should be less afflicted to hear of his being ill. He is young, Miss, and may recover: but if he is inconstant there can be no remedy. This last motive of inquietude is more sharp and cruel than the other. I entreat you then to confess his disorder; you will compose my mind: be so kind as to tell me: I shall be discreet. She returned no answer: her silence made me grow impatient; I took hold of her arm, and seated myself before her, to oblige her to answer me. But judge of my astonishment, when instead of a reply I heard some sighs, and saw her countenance bathed in tears. Oh! Miss! cried I, turning pale, why do you weep? what mean those tears? I asked what my heart began already to presage. My eyes were opened; every thing that had passed during her fit rushed into my mind. She stood near an easy-chair, into which she threw herself: I sat by her, and wept too. Come, Miss, you need make use of no disguise with me, said I; I believe I understand you. Where have you seen Mr. de Valville? Unkind, unworthy man! is it possible that he loves me no more? Alas! my dear Marianne, returned she, O that I had but been acquainted with this before! Well, rejoined I, speak freely, have you robbed me of his heart? Say rather that I have lost my own, replied she. ——— What! he loves you then, and you return his passion; how unhappy am I! We have both reason to complain, returned she. He has not mentioned you to me. I confess I love him, but I will never see him again. ——— He will love me no more, cried I, shedding a flood of tears; he will love me no more: Oh where am I? and what shall I do? Alas! Mrs. de Valville, I shall not

not then be your daughter ! In vain you have been so generous to me ! What ! you, Mr. de Valville, you unfaithful to Marianne ! you that have loved her with such a transporting tenderness ! you abandon her ! Is it you, Miss, that take him from me ! you who have had the cruelty to contribute to my recovery ! Oh ! that you had rather let me die ! How is it possible to survive his loss ! I have given my heart to both, and in return you both give me death. Oh ! I shall never support a life of such torture.——Pray don't reproach me, returned she in a moving tone, I am not capable of a perfidious action ; I will tell you every thing ; he deceived me.——He deceived you ! interrupted I in my turn. Ah ! Miss, why did you listen to him ? why did you love him ? why did you encourage his passion ? your mamma was but just gone, and left you overwhelmed with grief, how then had you the courage to love ? Besides, you knew he was not my brother ; you had seen us together ; he is amiable, and I am young, and was it difficult to imagine we might love ? what is your excuse ? But pray tell me where you have seen him ? what methods did you take to deprive me of his tenderness ? never, sure, had any man so much as he ; never will he find one so tender as me. He will regret his forsaking me, but I shall be no more : he will remember how much I loved him : he will lament my death : you will have the grief to see it : you will reproach yourself with having betrayed me, and never enjoy any solid happiness. Have I betrayed you ? returned she : Ah, my dear Marianne, is it possible I should confess that I love him, if I had not been myself deceived ; but it is I that must be the victim of his infidelity. Endeavour to calm your mind,

mind, so as to hear me for a moment. You have a soul too great to suffer you to be unjust, tho' you seem to be so; judge of me by my sincerity: I had never seen him before my fainting at parting with my mamma. As soon as I returned to myself, the first object that struck me, was Valville on his knee before me; he had my hand in his; I don't know whether you observed the looks he cast upon me; but weak as I was, I could not help taking notice of them. He is amiable, you acknowledge it yourself, and I thought so too. His eyes were fixed upon me till I entered the convent, and unhappily I could not help taking notice of it; I knew not who he was; and what you told me of your history, could give me no light into it. It is true I sometimes had him in my thoughts, but it was only as one that I imagined I should never see more. I was told some days after that a person they did not name desired to speak to me from Mrs. de Valville. I was then with you, I went down, and found it was he that waited for me. I blushed at seeing him; he appeared embarrassed, and his embarrassment gave me some confusion. He asked, with a smile, if I knew him, and had not forgot that I had ever seen him? He told me that my fainting made him tremble, and that he was never so moved in his life, as at the condition in which he had seen me; that it had been ever since present before him; that his heart was struck with it; and then begged my pardon for the freedom with which he explained himself on that subject.

WHILST she was speaking thus, she did not perceive that her words went to my heart: she heard neither my sighs nor my groans; she wept too.

too much herself to give any attention to them ; and cruel as her recital was, my heart attended to it, and could not renounce the pangs it felt at every word she uttered. For my part she resumed, I was so moved at his discourse, that I was unable to stop him. He did not tell me, however, that he loved me ; but I was very sensible that this was what he would intimate : and it was said in a manner which it would have been unreasonable to have been offended at. I held that lovely hand in mine, added he. You no sooner opened your eyes but you saw me at your feet, and it was with the greatest difficulty I arose from thence ; I must still prostrate myself before you, whenever I behold your charms. — And this he did, cryed I interrupting her, while he thought me dying ! I am then entirely banished from his heart : he never said any thing so tender to me. I can't recollect what answer I made him, returned she. All that I remember is, that I concluded with telling him that I must retire, and that I had suffered his conversation too long ; when he excused himself with such an air of submission and respect as soon appeased me. I arose up and was going to leave him, when he turned his discourse on my mamma, and of the great desire Mrs. de Valville had to see me at her house. He mentioned too the marchioness of Kilmair, whom he said we were both acquainted with ; and at this lady's house I have been three or four times since your recovery. He added that he was to sup that evening with one of her relations. At last, when I was going to leave him, he told me he had like to have forgot a letter, which his mother desired him to deliver to me. He blushed at giving it me. I took it, as I sincerely thought it came from Mrs. de Valville ;
but

but he was no sooner gone, than I found it was his own. I opened it while I was coming back to you ; with an intention to let you see it ; however I did not, and you will see the reason that hindered me. She then drew the letter out of her pocket, gave it me open, and desired me to read it. I took it with a trembling hand, and durst not at first look upon those characters which had often before filled me with delight. At last, however, I cast a look upon it, and wet it with my tears: He writes, cried I, but it is not to me ; it is no longer to the unhappy Marianne ! I was so penetrated with this reflection ; it stuck so close to my heart, that for a long time I breathed nothing but sighs, and was unable to begin to read it. It was pretty short, and ran thus :

“ SINCE the day of your melancholy accident,
“ Miss, I have not been myself. I foresaw that
“ in coming here to-day my respect for you
“ would hinder me from telling you what an impression you have made upon my mind ; but I
“ have foreseen too, that my timid and troubled
“ countenance would acquaint you with it.
“ You have seen me tremble before you. I
“ fear this letter will offend you ; but my heart
“ will not be bolder than it was when I was
“ in your presence ; it trembles still. You have
“ doubtless conceived an affection for Miss Marianne, and it is very likely that at your leaving the parlour you will go and make her
“ the confidante of your surprise, and perhaps
“ of your indignation on my account. But
“ I beg you would forbear, you would wrong
“ me in the opinion of my mother, from whom
“ your friend conceals nothing. I shall give
you

“you another time a reason for my request.
 “Dear Miss, my secret has escaped me. I
 “adore you. I had not dared to tell you so, if
 “you had not known it.”

I SHALL reserve, Madam, the sequel of this
 adventure to the eighth part.

The End of the SEVENTH PART.

THE

THE VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART VIII.

I COULD not forbear laughing very heartily, Madam, at your anger against my perfidious lover; could any thing be more diverting? You desire to know when you may expect the sequel of my adventures, and say you wait for it with the utmost impatience; but I must not mention a word more of Valville, you can't bear the very thought of him. I fancy that instead of the life of your friend, you have insensibly brought yourself to believe you were reading a romance; and this granted, there may be some reason for the violence of your indignation. What! an unfaithful romantic hero! sure never was heard such a prodigy! It is an established rule, that they all of them ought to be true; and it is on this account only that we interest ourselves in their concerns. Besides, nothing is more easy than to render them so, since fiction alone is at the expence of the whole.——But infidelity is uncommon no where but in this visionary romantic world. I am here representing things as they really are, as the instability of all human things render them, and not the adventures of the brain, which may be framed as we please; not a fictitious heart, but the heart of a man, a Frenchman, and one

one that now really exists; a cotemporary of the lovers of the present age. This, Madam, I say, is the sum of his character. He had only these trifling difficulties to overcome towards being as constant as your most renowned hero's; and pray don't lose sight of this. I would have you look upon him with the eye of an unconcerned spectator. We have all of us some faults mingled with our perfections, and no man is entirely exempt from them. You at first thought him charming, and now think him quite hateful; but you will soon conceive a more favourable opinion of him.

VALVILLE, who the first moment he saw me, loved me with a tenderness as lively as it was sudden; a passion commonly of a short duration; and much like those early fruits which are frequently blasted before they arrive to maturity: Valville, I say, notwithstanding his volatile disposition, was even then a very honest man, but was born with a mind extremely susceptible of soft impressions; he meets with a dying beauty who touches him, and snatches me from his heart; but he has not left me for ever. He is only cloyed with the pleasure of loving me, because he at first enjoyed it too greedily. But his taste will return to him, he rambles only to recover himself. He hunts after a new beauty, and I in my turn shall become one more charming to him than ever. He will see me in a situation that will melt his heart; my grief and the tender dispositions of my mind will entirely alter me, and give me graces hitherto unknown to him. You see, Madam, I make a jest of it now, tho' I wonder how I could then bear up under it. Let us now proceed, and enter upon this moving part of my adventures.

WE are now at Valville's letter, which I read over, notwithstanding the sighs and tears which almost

almost suffocated me; while Miss Varthon with her eyes fixed on the floor, was weeping too; and seemed in a profound revery. As for me I sat almost senseless, with my head leaning on the back of my chair. At last I lifted it up, and began again to look over the letter. Ah! Valville, cried I, I have nothing now to do but to die! and then casting my eyes upon Miss Varthon. Don't afflict your self, Miss, said I, you will both be soon at liberty to love each other. I shall not live long: this will be the last of all my misfortunes. At this discourse the young lady starting suddenly from her pensive and thoughtful posture, addressed me with a firm and resolute air. Why do you resolve to die? said she, for whom do you afflict yourself? Is this a man worthy of your grief; worthy of your tears? Is this the man you professed to love? Is he what you thought him? would you have considered him as worthy your esteem had you known him? would you then have given him your heart, or have accepted of his? It is true you once thought him amiable; and imagined he had a mind that deserved your esteem; and I thought so too; but we were both deceived. He wants those virtues which are necessary to constitute the character of a gentleman: his behaviour renders him despicable. He loves you; he is going to marry you; you fall sick, and he is told your life is in danger; he then forgets you, and takes that opportunity to declare that he loves me; me, whom he had only seen for a moment, and who had hardly said two words to him. Ah! what a strange kind of love was that he had for you? what name can be given to that he has for me? From whence can proceed the fancy of indulging a new passion in such circumstances as these? Alas! it was only because he thought he saw me dying; the sight moved his little, weak, unsteady mind, which

which is the sport of every new and singular object. If he had seen me in perfect health, he would have taken no notice of me; my fainting was the cause of his infidelity; and perhaps even you, who are so lovely, so capable of inspiring that tender passion, ow'd your conquest, by which you were able to fix him a few months, to your misfortunes, and your fall at his door. I acknowledge he took a great deal of notice of you at church; but that was only because you were charming; and his admiration, it is likely, would not have proceeded to love, without the assistance of your situation, and your accident. ——— However, he loved me, cried I, interrupting her; he loved me, and you have taken him from me, and perhaps I had no body in the world to fear but you. ——— Pray let me make an end, continued she, I have not done yet. I have confessed that he was agreeable to me; but don't imagine that I have let him know it; for he has not the least suspicion; nor is he worthy of being acquainted with it; and prejudiced as you are doubtless now against me, I beg you would keep it secret, if not out of friendship, at least out of generosity. A young lady of your excellent disposition, need not a particular affection for people to make you use them kindly, when there is no just reason for being displeased with them. Farewel, Marianne, added she, rising; I leave you Valville's letter, make what use of it you please; shew it to Mrs. de Valville, shew it her son; you have my consent to it; I can't be blamed for what he has the assurance to write to me; and if you should desire me to confront him, and make him publicly blush for his conduct, I am so incensed against him, and so much despise his ridiculous love, that I shall make no scruple of it; and shall readily join with you in your resentment.

However,

However, I have taken a resolution never to see him more, without you require it of me. I will forget that I have ever seen him, and if I meet him, I won't seem to know him; for flying from him would be doing him too much honour. You, I believe, are neither ambitious nor selfish; and if you are only affectionate and reasonable, you will lose nothing. As Valville is unworthy of your tenderness, you ought not to regret the loss of his. You must consider yourself as if you had never had a lover: for to have a general one, is to have none at all: yesterday he was your's, to-day he is mine, if I may believe him; and to-morrow he will be another's; and yet will still have no sincere passion for any body. Leave him then at large, and reserve your heart, as I shall mine, for one who will give you his in return.

HERE she came to me, and gave me a friendly embrace, which I received without the least motion; I only looked earnestly at her, and let my eyes wander over her. She took one of my hands and pressed it between hers, whilst I let her do as she pleased, without being able to make any reply, or to return her caresses. I did not know whether I should love or hate her, treat her as a rival or a friend; tho' methought I had some sentiments of gratitude in my soul for those marks of friendship I received from her, as well as for the resolution she had taken to see Valville no more. I heard her sigh as she left me: I shall not see you again till to-morrow, said she; and I hope I shall find you then more serene and more sensible of my friendship. To all this I could still make her no reply, and only followed her with my eyes till she was gone.

I WAS then left alone, leaning back in a chair, where I remained about half an hour, with my thoughts

thoughts so disturbed and confused, that I seemed almost stupified. The nun I have already mentioned as peculiarly deserving the character of my friend, at last entered, and surprized me in this disordered state of mind. Tho' I saw her, I did not stir; and I believe I should have kept myself in the same situation, if even the whole body of nuns and boarders had entered too. There are afflictions so violent as to make us forget ourselves, in which the soul has not the discretion to make a secret of the state it is in; it is not at all embarrassed at being made a spectacle of to others: And this was exactly my case. The nun astonished at my not moving to salute her; at my silence, and my wild and stupid look, came towards me in a kind of fright. My dear, what is the matter? what ails you? cried she; are you ill? No, returned I, and then was silent.—— But what is the matter then? you look pale, dejected, and I think you are crying too; have you received any ill news? —— Yes, returned I, and then stopt again. She knew not what to think of my monosyllables, and the faint manner in which I pronounced them. At last she perceived the letter which I was still holding with a weak and trembling hand, and which was wet with my tears. Is this, my dear, the cause of your affliction? added she, taking hold of it; will you permit me to read it. Yes, cried I: Pray who does it come from? she rejoined. Alas! come from —— I could say no more, my grief stopped my voice. She seemed extremely moved, and I observed she wiped her eyes, and then read the letter. Come, Miss, said she, this lets me into the whole matter. You are full of consternation, and give way to your grief: I sympathize with you in your affliction. You are young and want experience. You are born with

a noble soul, with a heart sincere and void of artifice ; and this is a reason why you are more penetrated with a misfortune of this kind. Yes, Miss, sigh, complain, and indulge your grief. I am not a stranger to the situation you are now in ; I have experienced it, and was as much afflicted as you ; but a friend nearly of the age I am now of, surprised me in the condition I now see you in, and endeavoured to console me : she talked reason, I listened to her, and at last received comfort. She comforted you, Madam, cried I, lifting up my eyes to heaven. She comforted you ! did you say ?
——Yes, returned she, you don't conceive it possible ; and I then thought so too.

LET us see, said my friend, for what it is you thus give yourself up to despair. It is for one of the most frequent occurrences of life ; and which is hardly of any consequence to you. You love a man who returned your affection, and now leaves you for another, and you call this a very great misfortune. But are you sure it deserves that name, and may not it be quite the contrary ? How can you tell but this infidelity may be an advantage to you ; and that you would repent your having married him ; that his jealousy, his ill-humour, his debauchery, and a thousand other essential faults, which he may have unknown to you, might make you groan out a tedious unhappy life ? You only look upon the present moment : cast your views a little farther, and consider that his inconstancy may be a blessing from heaven. That over-ruling providence which presides over all things, is conducted by unerring wisdom ; and the father of mankind knows what will promote our happiness better than we do ; his love infinitely exceeds that we have for ourselves : you are now lamenting an imaginary misfortune,

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which in a little time will perhaps be the subject of your joy. Take courage then, if he is not destined for your husband, you will be a gainer by losing him; as I myself have been in being abandoned by one who was dear to me, and who forsook me for another, whom he has made miserable in that condition, in which I once wished myself, and which I foolishly imagined would make me completely happy. You love him you will say, and as you have no fortune, his wealth would be yours; but could nothing but his infidelity deprive you of it? was he secure from every illness; might he not die before your marriage, and would not every thing then be lost? would there be no resource left for you? and does his unfaithfulness deprive you now of the comforts you would then have enjoyed? Tho' you love him now, do you think you shall never be able to love any but him? are there none so rich, none so amiable as he? To what purpose then is your uneasiness? You are young, and have but just entered upon life: You are blessed with a happy genius, an amiable soul, and a fine person; you have a variety of pleasing prospects before you; and yet give yourself up to despair for a man who will perhaps return to you again. Thus it was my friend reasoned with me, added the nun, in the first transports of my grief. And I will tell you the rest when you are capable of attending to me.

HERE I fetched one of those sighs which escape us when we are told something that moderates our afflictions. She perceived it. These motives of consolation touched me, continued she, and they ought to have still a greater weight with you, to whom they are more applicable than they were to me. My friend spoke to me of my perfections, but you have more of them; I don't tell you this to flatter you.

you ; I was agreeable enough, but had not your charms. As to the qualities of your mind, you have received proofs of the impression they make upon every body. You know the esteem and tenderness Mrs. de Valville has for you ; and I know not one sensible person in our house, that is not prejudiced in your favour. Mrs. Dorfin, who is so good a judge of true merit, is ready to be another Mrs. de Valville to you. You delight every body at her house ; and wherever you appear, it is the same. I don't pretend to make any account of my own judgment ; yet, tho' I am pretty difficult, and not easily pleased, I was struck with your presence, and instantly became ambitious of being your friend. Who could be otherwise ? Then what is it to you to be deprived of a lover, who dishonours himself in leaving you, and who is not in my opinion the most considerable of all the matches that will be offered you ? Therefore compose your mind, Marianne ; make yourself perfectly easy ; it does not require any great effort of reason to be so ; for the least degree of spirit, joined to what I have told you, is more than sufficient to give you that tranquility you stand in need of.

I THEN looked at her in a manner that shewed I was half vanquished by her reasons, and half softened with a grateful sense of the pains she took to calm my troubled mind, and gave her my hand with an air of friendship and affection, which seemed to say ; how soothing is the confidence of a friend ! how sweet the satisfaction of being in such hands as yours ! I found my affliction began to abate ; for we are very near receiving comfort, when we take an affection for those who try to assuage our grief. This obliging lady staid about an hour longer with me, insinuating the most

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pleasing

pleasing things, which she had the art to make me think extremely judicious. And tho' indeed they were so, yet it was necessary, in order to gain my attention, that they should be set off with that affectionate tone, and that look of benevolence with which she uttered them. At last the bell rung to call her to supper; as for me I had my provisions still brought me into my room. Well, said she smiling, I am glad I don't leave you so inconsiderate and void of reflection as I found you; you are now become reasonable, you know yourself, and will do yourself justice. Believe me, you were much to blame to give way to such excessive, such immoderate grief and dejection of spirit. I cannot easily pardon it, and shall take the liberty to chide you for it this great while. I could not help smiling at this friendly raillery, which disposed me to think that I had really exaggerated my misfortunes. Sure my friend would not take this method to comfort me, thought I, if my affliction was so very serious as I have imagined it.

SHE had no sooner left me, than one of the lay-sisters brought me my supper, and began to set some things to rights in my room. This woman was naturally of a gay disposition: Come, come, said she, you are almost as fresh as a rose already; you have quite recovered your illness, and there is not the least appearance of it left: won't you take a little walk in the garden after supper? No, replied I, I feel myself fatigued, and design to go to bed as soon as I have eat a little. Well, well returned she, all in good time, sleeping will do you as much good as walking. On this she left me.

You will easily judge that I made but a very light supper; for tho' my friend the nun had recovered

recovered my spirits, and taught me to moderate my uneasiness, yet I continued still in a very deep melancholy : I revolved in my mind all she had told me. She had said I had but just begun to live. You are in the right, said I to myself ; my fate is not yet decided, and I ought to prepare myself for many other events. Others will love me, he will see it, and they will teach him to revive his esteem. A man who is inconstant, thinks he leaves the injured lady solitary ; but when he sees his place filled up by another, he begins to think himself mistaken, and looks upon it as an accident he could not have foreseen : he can hardly believe it is her that he discarded, and seems surprized to find she has still so many charms. New thoughts succeeded to these ; is he not the most amiable, the most tender of mankind ? and must I lose him ? shall I ever find one like him ? Ah ! Mr. de Valville, the charms of Miss Varthon will not justify you ; and I shall perhaps have as many admirers as she. Upon this I wept and went to-bed. Amongst the various thoughts which revolved in my mind, there was one which I at last fixed upon. Why should I, said I to myself, who have virtue and sense, who have a character and sentiments which render me generally esteemed, and all the charms of youth, have the weakness to destroy myself with a grief which perhaps will be thought interested, and which will only serve to swell the vanity of a man who treats me so unworthily. This last reflection roused up my courage, it had something noble in it, that inspired me with resolutions that rendered me more calm and tranquil. I laid a scheme for my behaviour to Valville, and fixed upon what method I should make use of to discover his infidelity to his mother. In a word, I pro-

posed to act with a spirit, a modesty, a decency, worthy of that Marianne who had been so highly esteemed. In short, to behave with a conduct, which, in my opinion, would be more proper to make Valville regret his forsaking me, if he had any generosity left, than all the tears I could shed, which often only serve to degrade us, even in the opinion of the lover we lament, and at least spread an air of disgrace over our charms. Thus enthusiastically enchanted with my little generous plan, I insensibly sunk to rest, and did not awake till late the next morning; but then I awoke only to renew my sighs.

HOWEVER industriously we endeavour to encourage ourselves in a situation like mine, we are continually liable to relapses, and that little repose we procure is too uncertain to be of long continuance: the soul only enjoys itself for a moment, and is sensible that its tranquillity depends upon a slight of imagination, which it would willingly preserve; but it constrains it too much, it is forced to retract itself into that condition which is most natural to it, that is, a state of agitation. This was my case. I not only thought that Valville was unfaithful, but that his mother would no longer be mine; and that I should never possess that apartment she had shewn me at her house, which was so near to her's. She had promised me this in the tenderest manner; how delightful would have been my situation! I had anticipated my happiness by reflecting upon it before-hand, and had promised myself many sweet and pleasing interviews with her; but all my hopes were vanished, and the happiness I had depended upon disappeared: how heavy, how severe was this disappointment! Valville no longer intended this should ever come to pass. This was an article I
did

did not think of the evening before. What would become of my mamma's picture which I had begged of her, and which she had assured me should be hung in my chamber, where it was placed perhaps already, but, alas! to no purpose, since it was not for me! How numerous were my griefs! how swift did they flow in upon me!

THO' I expected Mrs. de Valville would come that day, I did not hope to see her till the afternoon, but she was there in the morning. My friend the nun, who had paid me a visit soon after I was dressed, and whose conversation had again comforted me, had scarcely left the room, when I saw Miss Varthon enter. She appeared cast down, but less melancholy than the evening before. I gave her a reception which was neither cold nor very affectionate; I received her with a languishing look; and notwithstanding her friendly behaviour, and all she had told me, I felt some pain at seeing her: but whether she perceived it or no, she seemed not to take any notice of it. I think I ought to acquaint you with one thing, said she, with an open countenance, in which there appeared a visible concern; and that is, that I have been with Mr. de Valville. She stopped here as if ashamed of what she had told me. This surprising beginning made me sigh; I readily believe it, replied I, filled with the utmost consternation. But, pray, don't condemn me, without hearing me, rejoined she immediately. I have assured you that I would never see him more, and that was my intention; but I had not the least suspicion, that it was he who waited for me in the parlour. (And this indeed was true, as I heard since.) I was told that one desired to speak with me from Mrs. de Valville, continued she, and you are sensible that my appearance could not be dispensed

with. It would have been very rude and unkind to have refused going to her without a sufficient excuse. So that I was obliged to shew myself, tho' I did it with reluctance, and not till after some hesitation : and the uneasiness of my mind seemed to presage what was going to happen. Judge of my surprize, when I found Mr. de Valville in the parlour. You then retired, did not you returned I, with a weak and trembling voice? I had undoubtedly done so, replied she blushing ; but I no sooner saw him than I found it impossible to resist a natural impulse of indignation which seized me. Would not you have done so? No, said I, you would have shewn a greater resentment in retiring. May be so, returned she, but put yourself in my place, with the opinion I had of him. The words *I had* made me tremble, it seemed an ill omen of what was to follow. You are very bold, Sir, said I to him, to come here to surprize me, continued she, after the letter you wrote to me, which you could not have made me take without deceiving me : are you come now for an answer to it? If so you shall not wait long : I assure you, Sir, both your visits and your letters offend me extremely. The little service you have done me, does not intitle you to dispense with the regard you owed me, especially as you are under engagements to a young lady, that you can't forsake, without being guilty of a base perfidiousness. It is she, Sir, you ought to visit here, and not me ; who am not born to be the object of such an injurious, such a shameful intrigue. - This I was willing to say before I left him, added she, and was going to the door in order to leave him without condescending to hear what he had to say, when I heard him cry out, Oh ! Miss, you throw me into despair ; and this was uttered with such

a loud and mournful voice, that I thought myself obliged to stop, to prevent his crying out a second time, and alarming the house, which would have introduced a very disagreeable scene. No, no, said I, he would not have behaved so extravagantly; that precaution was entirely unnecessary. I beg your pardon, returned she a little confused; the servants, or any in the court, might have come at the noise, and have put me out of countenance; so it was wiser to stay a little, for I did not think he would detain me long. Well, Sir, what do you want with me? said I, in the same haughty tone; I don't desire to hear any thing that you can inform me of. Alas! Madam, I protest I have but one word to say to you: Pray return, replied he, with a bewildered look, and so much emotion, that it was impossible for me to proceed. Well, Sir, said I going back to him, what would you say? I came to tell you, returned he, that my mother will be here between eleven and twelve, and designs to take you and Marianne home with her to dinner: she did not desire me to tell you of it, but I thought you would permit me to let you know of it before-hand. You need not have given yourself that trouble, Sir, said I; Mrs. de Valville does me a great deal of honour, and I shall consider how I ought to behave. Is that all?—Why did you ask if that was all, said I? would you never have done? would you listen to him for ever? Dear Miss, said she, how you mistake me, it is quite the reverse, *is that all*, signified only that he tired my patience; I only said so to get a pretence to leave him, for I was all the while afraid of his disordered looks; for one don't know what to do with persons that are so little masters of themselves. Then assuring me that he would soon have done,

he began a discourse which I was obliged to hear from the beginning to the end. It was a vindication of himself with regard to you, occasioned by my having mentioned his perfidiousness. You may judge that his arguments could not persuade me to believe him as excusable as he thinks himself to be; but I must confess, that I don't find him quite so culpable as I before thought him. Ah! Miss, cried I, (without lifting up my head, least my looks should charge her with hypocrisy) is he not quite so culpable, do you say, who despised him so much yesterday? 'Tis true, indeed, returned she, I did despise him, and thought him the basest and most unworthy of all mankind, nor do I now pretend to say that he is not at all to blame; I only think he is less so than I at first imagined. My friendship induces me to tell you this, in order to diminish your affliction, by rendering his behaviour less shocking to you. You have looked upon him as a fickle and perfidious person, who suddenly changes without knowing why. But he is very far from it; it is some time since he endeavoured to remove his passion, with which he reproached himself. This he told me almost with tears in his eyes; it was even before your illness; he thought to conquer it by loving another; he only wanted an object; he saw me, I did not displease him; he felt a slight preference, which he could not help giving me over the rest, and seized the opportunity of making himself happy. That is all.—— Oh! Miss, said I, is this the comfort you would have me listen to? is this the consolation you bring me? Indeed, Miss, I thought it would be one, returned she: is it not more agreeable to you to think that it is not out of inconstancy or want of love that he leaves you, but that he is forced to do it with reluctance, and only

only from motives which appear to him to be reasonable ; and which, if I am not deceived, you will think so too, if you will permit me to repeat them to you ? Let us see now ; you have related your history to me, my dear Marianne, but there are a great many articles that you have but just touched upon, yet are extremely important, and may have been very prejudicial to you. Valville, who loved you, did not attend to them while they were concealed, and he was much in the right. But your story has been blazed abroad, and those little particulars are known to every body : there are few like him or his mother ; persons of generous sentiments are very scarce. The linen-draper with whom you lived as a shop-maid ; the good monk who went to petition the assistance of one of Mr. de Valville's relations ; the convent where you went to beg to be received out of charity ; the adventure of the linen draper, who knew you again at a lady's called Mrs. de Fare ; your being taken from thence ; your appearing at the prime minister's before so large a company ; the insignificant young fellow that was designed to displace Valville, and a hundred other things ; which tho' they turned out indeed to your advantage, and prove that none was ever more amiable and engaging, yet are very mortifying, and degrade you, tho' very unjustly. All these things, I say, have been represented to Valville, who has given me an account of them. You can't imagine all that has been said to him on this subject, or how much they condemn his mother, and teize him about his design of marrying you. His friends break off their acquaintance with him ; his relations will see him no more, unless he will lay aside his project, and there are none even of the indifferent and unconcerned that do not laugh and jeer at him ;

in fine, he must bear the most mortifying things, and go thro' the endless insults : I can't repeat half of what they say to him. What ! a girl that has nothing ! say they : a girl that don't know who she is ! how can you have the face, Sir, to shew her to the world ? She has virtue ; but are there no ladies of quality who have it too ? Can nobody please you but your amiable orphan ? She loves you, you will say, but what can she do less ? is that a love to be boasted of ? can you be sure, that she would have had any esteem for you, if she had been your equal ? How do you know but her necessities may induce her to dissemble that passion, to draw you in, and keep you to herself ? All these ideas, Sir, will one day come into your mind, they add with equal malice and stupidity, and you will then be sensible of the indignity you are now offering yourself ! and be at least obliged to leave your country, and go and hide yourself with your wife, to avoid the scorn you will bring upon yourself ; but wherever you go, don't hope to avoid the misfortune of hating her, and cursing the day, when first you knew her.

HERE I could contain myself no longer ; I had been silent, whilst she repeated to me all these mortifying, these humbling expressions. And of what service could it have been to me, to have vindicated myself, or have given a loose to my complaints ? It could not be doubted but she was ready to follow her inclinations. I saw that Valville had sufficiently justified himself in her opinion ; and that she only sought to clear him in mine, that I might dispense with her promise of despising him. This I saw very plainly, and my reproaches would have been of no signification at all. But how cruel, how extremely barbarous was it to mention that hatred which they predicted Valville would

would have for me ! How severe the reflection, that he would curse the day of our acquaintance ! this pierced my heart, and tried my patience to the utmost. Oh ! this is too much, Miss ; it is too much ! cried I. He detest me ! he curse the time when he first saw me ! the thought is quite insupportable ! have you the courage to threaten me with it ? to come and entertain me with such frightful ideas ? Is this your boasted friendship ? Is this the method you take to dissipate my uneasiness ? can you believe I don't understand you, and see into the bottom of your heart ? Is it like a friend to use me in this manner ? cannot you love him without taking away my life ? You will have it that he is innocent and would convince me of it. Well, Miss, I will confess that he is so, give him again your esteem. He is in the right ; he ought to blush at having loved me. I grant that our marriage would cover him with all the reproaches you have enumerated. Yes, I am nothing, the meanest creature upon earth is above me. I have subsisted hitherto only upon charity ; they know it, and reproach me with it. I am sufficiently convinced that Valville ought to abandon me, and that he may do it without any impeachment of his honesty. But for you to threaten me with his hatred and his curses ; me, who am dying ; it is too much, I cannot bear it ; You might have justified Valville, and have insinuated that his passion for you is not at all blameable, without coming to crush me under these barbarous presages. It may be you, perhaps, that he will hate ; it will perhaps be yourself, and not me, Miss : take care.

THIS reproach perfectly stunned her. She did not expect that I should so readily find out her artifice ; and I saw her blush and turn pale successively.

cessively. You put a very ill construction upon my intentions, returned she, with a troubled air. What wild transports! I crush you! I pierce your heart! how very strange is this! have I any share in your misfortunes? am I responsible for the ideas people inspire this gentleman with? is it my fault if he is moved by them? is it any wonder that they make an impression upon him? However, I must say again, there is less infidelity than weakness in his change, and it is impossible to judge otherwise. Those who talk to him thus, are more to blame than he; he is not perfidious, but only ill advised. I thought I should have pleased you in telling you this, and that was all the artifice I have made use of. I wish he had resisted all that has been said to him, he would then have been more worthy of praise; but I can't think that either you or I have a right to despise him for it. Every body will excuse his fault, nor will it make him sink in the esteem of any one. This is my opinion, and if you are equitable, it must be your's too; your own peace and tranquility require it. I should be more easy if this conversation was dropped, said I, weeping. As you please, returned she. I will say no more. And I assure you, I shall never resume it. Fare you well, Miss, added she, retiring. I made her no reply, only bowed my head and let her go.

You will perhaps be apt to imagine, Madam, that I am now going to abandon myself to a greater excess of grief than ever. At least you must see that I have a new acquisition of painful, uneasy circumstances. False as Valville was, I could not absolutely say before this discourse, that I had a rival; but now she was a most complete one. They mutually loved each other; and her discourse told me, what an impression he had made on her heart;

heart; and that she had taken a resolution to cherish her growing passion: Must not this, according to all appearance, renew my despair, and plunge me into the most cruel, the most bitter affliction? But so far from it, she had no sooner left the room, than my tears began insensibly to cease. This new augmentation of sorrow stopped them, and made me unable to shed any more. When a misfortune which we have believed to be extreme, becomes still greater, the soul seems to lay aside its sorrow; it collects all its strength to enable it to bear up courageously; its excess brings it to reason; it would be to no purpose to afflict itself; and therefore it yields and is silent: it has no other choice left, and this made even unknown to myself. It was with this kind of coolness, that I peacefully contemplated my misfortunes; became convinced that there was no remedy, and consented to endure this unhappy adventure with patience. Thus my troubles terminated in a profound melancholy; I was peaceful and tractable. A state less cruel than that of absolute despair.

I was in this situation of mind, when a lady-sister told me, Mrs. de Valville was come, and a person waited for me in the parlour; I imagined it was she that was there; and notwithstanding the calm I was just in, I went down a little moved, and my eyes grew moist by the way. That dear, that tender mother, said I, to myself, thinks she comes to see her daughter: she don't know that she will only see the poor Marianne, stripped of that affectionate, that charming appellation her goodness would bestow upon me. I resolved however, not to inform her of any thing yet: I had my reason for concealing it, and intended to wait for a more favourable moment. I dried my eyes

eyes at the parlour door, endeavoured to assume a serene countenance, and after two or three sighs, I entered. A curtain drawn before the grate hid from me still the person I was going to see; but prepossessed with the opinion that Mrs. de Valville was behind it; Ah! my dear mamma, cried I, as I advanced towards it, is it you that are come to see me? when drawing the curtain, I was ready to tear it, for presenting instead of Mrs. de Valville, her unfaithful son. I started and was so struck with the sight, that I stood some time with my head hanging down, stunned and without the power to speak a single word. What is the matter my charming Marianne? said he, 'tis me: did not they tell you so? how ravished am I to see you! Alas! you seem to be very weak still: my mother is in the parlour next this with Mrs. Dorfin, talking with a nun; and she desired me to tell you that she would be here in a moment, and that she designs to take you and your friend Miss Varthon with her; but I am very much afraid that you are not in a condition to go out: think of it, however, won't you go and dress you? No, Sir, said I, recovering my spirits; no, I won't dress me, I am not yet perfectly well, and Mrs. de Valville will give me leave to remain as I am. O without doubt, replied he. Well! you have given us terrible alarms, added he immediately, with the tone of a man who would shew some concern, and who would speak tho' he had nothing to say. Pray, how do you do? I don't know whether I am deceived or not; but you appear very much dejected; perhaps your illness has given you that thoughtful air; for I hope nothing has disturbed you.

I EASILY perceived that he said this, because my sadness and reserved behaviour alarmed him.

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He did not know Miss Varthon had revealed his secret to me, for she had concealed from him all that passed between us on that subject, and had persuaded him to believe that she had only learnt our engagements from the friendly confidence I reposed in her: but the guilty are always suspicious: Miss Varthon by some imprudent word might have given me some light: and this was what he feared. Hitherto I had not dared to look in his face. I did not care that he should read in my eyes, that I too well knew every thing; and apprehended that I should not be able to dissemble with him. At last I thought I might trust myself, and looked up. When a person is recovered from an illness so great as mine, returned I, observing how he looked at me, our weakness gives a melancholy air.

AH! Madam, how difficult is it to commit a perfidious action with an unmoved countenance! The soul must naturally be extremely tender of its honour, and have a strong propensity to truth, since it is so difficult to surmount the confusion it feels at being false. Valville could not meet my looks, notwithstanding all the assurance he endeavoured to put on. I could hardly know him again; he did not seem to be the same man; he had no longer that frankness, that openness of countenance, that joy at seeing me, which always used to sparkle in his eyes, and express the tender sentiments with which I inspired him. — Love was banished from thence, and nothing remained but embarrassment and imposture: I saw nothing now but a visage cold and constrained, which he strove to enliven, and to conceal the indifference, that in spite of all his endeavours, was very visible: Alas! Madam, such a sight was insupportable to me; I was obliged to cast down my eyes, and not to look at him again. Here a deep sigh escaped me

me, which it would have been impossible to have concealed, and which he took notice of with the appearance of some concern. Have you any difficulty of breathing, Marianne? said he. No, returned I; I am only very weak: and then followed a long interval without either of us speaking a word, which happened more than once. These pauses had something very singular in them. They had been entirely unknown in our former interviews, and the more they disconcerted my unfaithful lover, the more frequent they became. For my part, I could only prevail on myself to be silent, and not to explain the subject of my disorder; which I could neither conceal, nor put any restraint upon my looks and behaviour. Your languishing condition makes me very uneasy, said he, we have been assured that you were much better recovered. Do you take any recreation in your convent? You have some friends there. Yes, returned I, I have a nun who sincerely loves me, and then I see Miss Varthou, who is a most amiable lady. She appears to be so, he replied, but you are a better judge of that than I. Does she know, said I, that Mrs. de Valville is come for her? Yes, I think my mother desired she should be told of it, returned he. You would be glad to be better acquainted with her, said I. Why? I have seen her here once or twice; my mother desired me to call upon her to enquire after your health, cried he, did not you know it? She should have told you of it. Yes, replied I, she mentioned it to me. And then we were silent again; he, out of confusion, and I from discretion and melancholy. But come, endeavour, Miss, to recover, said he, I think I hear my mother in the court; I will see if I am not mistaken, added he, going to the window. This action spared him some words,

words, which he would have been obliged to speak to keep up the conversation; at least it entitled him to mention what he saw, or did not see in the court. Yes, cried he, it is she herself with Mrs. Dorfin. They will be here in a moment; and I will go and open the door. He left me without saying any more; and went down some of the stairs to offer Mrs. Dorfin his hand. He was glad of a pretence to run from me. Whilst I as soon as he was gone endeavoured to smother my sighs, and to assume a countenance as serene and undisturbed as possible.

My dear child, said Mrs. Dorfin, as she entered, giving me her hand; I thank heaven for thy preservation. We had not come till the afternoon, but I told your mamma that you must dine with us, that we might have your company the longer. Madam, she is a great deal better than I could imagine, added she, addressing herself to Mrs. de Valville; she is wonderfully recovered, and I think is not much altered. I don't remember what answer she made her. Valville stood by Mrs. Dorfin, and smiled at looking on me; as if he too found a great deal of pleasure at seeing me again. My dear daughter, said Mrs. de Valville, thou art not dressed yet; I sent my son to tell thee I was coming for thee. This she said with the most affectionate air. At the name of daughter, I let fall some tears, and observed that Valville blushed; but I don't know why, except he was ashamed to see me moved to so little purpose, and thought that the sweet and tender name of daughter, would be at last of no signification. Indeed your daughter loves you too much, cried Mrs. Dorfin, for her present weakness; there is no need of these emotions, nor of that melting tenderness, which seizes her heart
at

at seeing you ; and I am afraid they will do her no good. Let her be perfectly recovered, and then she may weep for joy as much as she pleases ; but let her indulge none of these softnings till then. Come, Miss, endeavour to chear up, and let us go. I stay for Miss Varthon, returned my mamma, but as for you, my dear, added she, looking at me, you may go as you are. You need not take the trouble to dress now. Alas ! notwithstanding the desire we have to take her with us, I tremble for fear she should come out too soon, said Valville ; who under the pretence of a concern for my health, probably had no other design, but to furnish me with an excuse which he hoped I would take hold of ; but he was deceived. No, Sir, cried I, I am not ill at all, and since this dear lady will dispense with my dress, I shall be charmed with the pleasure of going with her. What do you mean by *lady* ? returned Mrs. de Valville, smiling ; who do you speak to ? your illness has rendered you mighty grave. Call me very respectfully your mamma. I can never have respect enough for you, Madam, returned I with a sigh, which I was unable to conceal. It did not escape Mrs. Dorfin, and confounded the uneasy, the guilty Valville ; who was, with some reason, out of countenance. This sigh, joined to my respectful behaviour, seemed to proceed from some hidden cause. Mrs. Dorfin appeared to think so, and to take notice of Valville's confusion, by the manner in which she observed us both. My mamma was going perhaps to make me some farther reply, when Miss Varthon entered in a negligent, but elegant dishabille. As she had foreseen that notwithstanding my uneasiness, I might go with them to dinner ; she had, without doubt, satisfied herself with dressing in this manner ; which seemed

to exclude all design of pleasing, and which she probably thought would leave me no room to accuse her with any such intention. I immediately guessed her motives for this apparent regard for me, and was not to be imposed upon by it. In these cases, a jealous and betrayed lover is quicker sighted, than a beloved one. I at once saw that she was not sincere; and that notwithstanding her negligence, she had not been willing to strip herself of any of her charms. I was dressed in the same manner as when I arose, and had only slept on a very bad gown. I was quite changed and thin, the fire of my eyes was almost extinguished, and had such a pale, sickly, and disturbed countenance, that I could not help being sensible of the disparity between us, and being mortified at appearing before her with such disadvantages, and thus contributing myself to justify Valville's infidelity. If a lover leaves us, and gives the preference to another, we are at least pleased to think him to blame for it; and, to charge it to his inconstancy, and not our want of charms; and thus to flatter ourselves that he is guilty of injustice. What lesser comfort can we taste? but yet in this case, methought I could not charge Valville with it. And this thought made me repent my having engaged to dine with his mother: but I could not go back. However, there were some things which might be alledged in my favour: and my rival, upon recollection had not such great cause for triumph. If she shone more than me, it was not because she was naturally more lovely, but it was owing only to her being in good health, and my having been ill. I might be excused if I then wanted my own charms; but she was obliged to have all her's. They saw how much she excelled me, but did not know how

how far I might exceed her when mine returned.

I NEED not repeat the compliments these ladies made her. It was time to go, and we both of us left the convent, stepped into the coach, and soon arrived at Mrs. de Valville's. I am afraid you are not perfectly recovered, said my mamma, with an affectionate look, when we were at dinner: you appear to have a languid melancholy which does not at all please me. Was she so in the convent, Miss? added she, speaking to Miss Varthon, who blushed at her question. Yes, Madam, returned she, she was pretty much the same. She recovers slowly, and no wonder her illness has been long and violent: however, she is sometimes better. Mrs. Dorfin said nothing, but did not cease examining Valville and me.

As we arose from table, the weather being very fine, it was proposed to take a walk on the terrass of the garden. The conversation was at first general; and then Miss Varthon was asked news of her mother; they talked of her voyage, her return, and her affairs. While they were on this subject, I pretended a curiosity to see a shady arbour at the end of the terrass. It appears to be very agreeably situated, said I, to engage Valville to wait on me thither. No, no, returned he, it is nothing uncommon. But as I arose up, he could not avoid following me, and leaving the rest of the company. I beg pardon, Sir, said I, to him as we walked, for depriving you of a conversation, in which you perhaps interest yourself; but I shall not detain you long. Why you jest, said he, don't you know the pleasure I take in being with you? I made him no answer; we entered the arbour, whilst my heart suffered the most violent palpitation, and I could not tell how to begin
what

what I had to say to him. *A propos*, cried he, (you will judge if *a propos* was a proper introduction to what he was going to mention) do you remember that I have been endeavouring to obtain a post? Do I remember, Sir? without doubt I do, returned I: it is that affair that has deferred our marriage. Is it concluded, Sir? or will it soon be so? Alas! no, there is nothing done yet, he replied; we are hardly any forwarder than we were at first; my mother will no doubt mention it to you. There has arisen difficulties which have retarded the conclusion of it; and which unhappily may put it off much longer. You must observe, Madam, that these were difficulties of his own procuring, and the result of an intrigue carried on between him and his friends, without Mrs. de Valville's knowledge, as will appear afterwards. There are creditors and heirs that oppose us, continued he: we must bring them to an agreement, and according to all appearance we shall not be able to do it soon. I am extremely sorry for it, and prodigiously uneasy, added he, taking too or three steps to go out of the arbour. Stay a moment, cried I, I am a little weary; let us sit down. Pray, Sir, tell me why these difficulties disturb you so much? Can't you guess? replied he, 'tis because it retards our marriage: you must imagine that I should be very glad to have it concluded. I have had a design to desire my mother to complete my happiness, before I obtained my place; but upon second thoughts I found it more proper to defer it, to keep to her decision, and not to press her too much; am not I in the right? Oh! there is nothing to be feared from her, returned I; it will never miscarry on her account.——No, I believe not, replied he; nor on mine neither: I dare say you are pretty sure of it; but that is
no

no reason why these delays should not make me impatient. I wish with all my heart, my mother had not put it off: she did not consult my love in it. I thought I ought to seize this opportunity to explain myself. Pray, Sir, what love is it you are speaking of, returned I, to enter upon the matter? What love! cried he, what love should it be but mine, Miss? my affection for you. Is my love to you a new thing? And can you attribute to me those obstacles which prevent an union, which I desire much more than you do yourself? Instead of a reply, I drew his letter to Miss Varthou out of my pocket, which you know she had left with me. As I gave it him open, he knew it at first sight. Judge then what was his confusion; it was quite inexpressible. It would have made any other but me pity him: however; he endeavoured to recover himself. Well, Miss, what paper is this? what would you have me do with it? said he, taking it with a trembling hand: ah! added he, with a forced laugh, without knowing what he said; I see it is mine; — it is my letter: — I forgot to tell you of it — it is a trifle. You were sick, the conversation turned upon love; and the subject made me a little pleasant; that's all, I thought no more of it. Miss Varthou and I saw each other sometimes at the marchioness of Kilnare's. — Every body knows, that I have not made a secret of it. — As I could not see you, I was willing to amuse and divert myself, to pass away the time. — But now we are speaking of this marchioness, I must tell you that I should be glad to see you acquainted with her; she is a lady of merit. I let him conclude this rambling discourse, which was void of sense and reason, and which perfectly expressed the disorder of his mind. I attended

attended to it with silence, and my eyes cast down. When he had done, Sir, said I, without using any reproaches, or taking hold of any thing he had said; I must do Miss Varthon the justice to assure you, that you ought not to accuse her with having made a premeditated sacrifice of your letter. She gave it me, in the sudden emotion of her mind, as she then just discovered that I had the vanity to think I was dear to you. The vanity I returned he, with a countenance perfectly disordered: sure, Miss, there is no vanity in that. Sir, returned I, with a modest tone, pray have the goodness to hear me make an end. Miss Varthon, to whom you paid a visit a few days ago, told me, as soon as she had left you, that you had been to visit her, and to enquire how I did; without mentioning a word of the letter you had just given her. But yesterday hearing that our marriage was agreed upon, she became quite stunned ——— Hah! stunned! cried he; why so? you surprize me; what is that to her? I don't know that, replied I, but however I took notice of it, asked her the reason, and pressed her to tell me: when she produced the letter and gave it me. Very good, returned he, she was mighty welcome, it was not any thing very important; what signifies the letter? she knows I intended nothing by it, and that it was only a little piece of gallantry; and I did not desire her to conceal it from you. You must excuse me, Sir, you forget yourself; you desired her not to shew it me in the letter itself, replied I, in a gentle friendly tone. But, pray let me conclude what I was going to say: I have wished for this explication, for no other reason, but that Miss Varthon, (supposing she should love you, as indeed you have reason to hope for;) should have no reason to accuse me of a jealousy,

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which would very ill become me.——But what do you mean with your explications and jealousies? cried he; what would you say? Indeed, Miss Marianne, I don't understand you. I don't indeed.——Pray, Sir, hear me, continued I, and let me conclude. Who is it that you thus debase yourself to dissemble with? Have you forgot whom you are speaking to? Am I not that Marianne, that poor, that unfortunate Marianne, who owes every thing to your family, and who knows not what would have become of her, had not your bounty saved her? Do I deserve that you should give yourself the trouble to explain and justify your conduct to me? No, Sir, the time is short, and don't therefore interrupt me; we must agree upon something. You know the dispositions of your own heart; but must be sensible that Mrs. de Valville is ignorant of them. She believes you are still actuated by those sentiments you lately entertained in my favour. She honours me with the most engaging, the most endearing affection; she persuades herself, that I shall soon be her daughter; impatiently waits till I am so; and may take the resolution to marry us, before you have obtained your post; and since you have so lately pressed her to it, may well imagine, that her desire to have it concluded, will fill you with the most pleasing transports. Can you then suddenly go to her, and acquaint her, that you have entirely banished me from your heart? I know, Sir, Mrs. de Valville has a mind full of truth and virtue; and without reckoning the grief a declaration of this kind would give her, such a surprise would doubtless prejudice you in her esteem. We must endeavour then to soften a little this adventure, and render it less shocking to her: A mother like her deserves all the pains we can take to prevent her uneasiness.

uneasiness. I should be extremely afflicted, should I make you incur her displeasure. Alas! who am I that I should be the subject of a quarrel between Mrs. de Valville and you? I, I say, who am obliged to you for great part of her tenderness, and for many of the benefits I have received from her. You would then indeed curse the day of your acquaintance with the unhappy orphan; but this I shall use all my endeavours to avoid. Therefore consider, Sir, how you would have me behave, and what steps you would wish me to take, to prevent the uneasiness I am speaking of. I will do every thing for you, except saying that I don't love you; for that would be far from being true: you need only tell me what you would have me do, and I will endeavour cheerfully to obey you. And believe me, Sir, it was only with an intention of serving you, that I took the liberty to draw you from a conversation, which you thought more engaging than mine.

HITHERTO Valville had stood his ground as well as he was able, and had the courage absolutely to deny his infidelity; the courage did I say? I should rather have called it a mean, a pitiful baseness, which would not suffer him generously to confess the situation of his heart; how painful must such a conduct be to a mind that was always inclined to virtue, and had ever the strongest propensity to truth! But what I had now told him, made him unable to resist any longer: my generosity confounded him, and made him sink before me: he dissembled no longer, but confessed his shame without the least reserve; I did not seem to take notice of his confusion, but as he still remained silent, I added, be so good as to give me an answer, what do you prescribe to me? Do as you please, Miss, returned he; I am to blame, and can't

vindicate myself. It is necessary, however, to advise what I should say, added I with a free and pressing air; but he continued mute, and it was impossible to get a word more from him. Here I observed that Miss Varthon had left the two ladies, and was coming up to us. Sir, said I, in the uncertainty in which you leave me, as to the part I ought to take, I shall act with as much discretion as possible; and it shall not be my fault if this affair don't succeed according to your desires.

As he continued silent, and I was going to leave him; Miss Varthon, who was already at the entrance of the arbour, pretended to be surprized at finding us there, and seemed as if unwilling to interrupt us. I beg pardon, said she, retiring; I did not think you had been there still. Indeed I imagined you were walking in the garden. You are very welcome to come in, Miss, said I, our conversation is finished, and you might have had your share in it. This gentleman is witness, that there has been nothing said against you. What do you mean by against me? returned she, indeed Miss, I don't doubt it. What connection is there between your secrets and my affairs? I made no reply, and went out of the arbour to meet the ladies, who were coming up to us; so that our two lovers could only remain a moment together. I don't know what they said, but I heard them soon follow me; and as I listened, methought Miss Varthon was talking very low to Valville. For my part I returned from this expedition with a pleasing kind of emotion. That dignity of sentiment I had shewn to my unfaithful lover; that shame and humility I left in his heart; that astonishment he was in at my generous behaviour; in short, that superiority which my mind had assumed

assumed over his ; a superiority more tender than displeasing, more amiable than vain ; filled my soul with the sweetest and most flattering sentiments ; and I found myself too worthy of his esteem not to be regretted. Sure, said I, it is impossible for him to love Miss Varthon, with the same tranquility he would before have done. I desired him to forget me, and be at peace with himself. I resolved to punish him by seeing him no more : and then, I imagined that his affliction would be superior to mine, as he alone was guilty. Ah ! why was he unfaithful ! These were the thoughts which employed my mind, as I advanced towards Mrs. de Valville ; and you can't imagine how greatly I was delighted with them, or how much they allayed my grief. Revenge is in some degree sweet to every offended heart ; and nothing but that can assuage its pain. Some will have a cruel, and others a generous one ; mine you see was of the last sort : for I wished my dear Valville no greater evil than to regret his forsaking me.

I HAVE already told you, that Miss Varthon and he followed me ; and we presently joined the other ladies. When a cold and troublesome breeze arising, Mrs. de Valville proposed our walking in. I perceived Mrs. Dorfin, who had the goodness to interest herself in my concerns, and who had entertained some suspicions of what had happened, had watched all our actions. I observed, that she fixed her eyes on Valville who turned away his head. His countenance had still an impression of the several emotions of his mind, which he was not yet able to disguise. Mrs. de Valville herself, who suspected nothing, discovered much disorder in his looks, coming up to me, Daughter, said she, lowering her voice, Valville seems
E 3 melan.

melancholy and thoughtful, pray what has passed between you? What hast thou said to him? Nothing, Madam, I replied, that he ought not to be very well satisfied with. I will soon make his gaiety return, I am determined, said she, without explaining herself any farther; and then we went in. As soon as we had taken our seats, my dear, said Mrs. de Valville, as Miss Varthon is your friend, we may talk freely before her of the marriage which is agreed upon between my son and you: and I hope she will even do us the honour to be present at it, and therefore I shall make no difficulty of speaking my mind before her. Here this young lady coloured; she foresaw that a scene was opening, in which she herself might be involved; however she bowed to Mrs. de Valville to thank her for the confidence she reposed in her. You are thinking of your post, son, continued the latter: I had made a resolution not to marry you till you had obtained it; but I did not foresee that you would meet with so many difficulties to obstruct your designs: but since they seem to have no end, since we can't tell when you will get over them, and since they trouble you so much, we need only overlook them, and conclude your marriage; with this single precaution to keep it secret for some time. I have taken measures accordingly unknown to you; and three or four days will be sufficient to prepare for it. We shall set out this evening for the country. This lady, added she, shewing us Mrs. Dorfm, has promised to give us her company, Miss will be so kind as to do the same, and all will be over in a few days.

HERE Valville fell again into all that distress and confusion into which I had cast him a few moments before. Miss Varthon blushed, and knew not what countenance to assume. For my part I held my

my peace, and had the air of one more melancholy than pleased: but there was no malice, nor ill-nature in my silence. My tenderness, and regard for Mrs. de Valville, and perhaps my love too for her son, tied up my tongue, and made me unable to make her any answer: here a short interval passed during which neither Valville nor I could open our lips. At last he broke silence, but it was rather to utter a few insignificant trifling words, than to make any reply; for he was entirely undetermined, and knew not what he was going to say. But he could not avoid saying something to fill up that surprizing vacancy in the conversation, occasioned by our silence. Yes, indeed, it is true——you are in the right; nothing is more easy——yes, in the country——when ever you please——we shall see——How! what do you say? We shall see? cried Mrs. de Valville in an amaze; are you absent? did you hear what I said? What shall we see? why is not every thing seen already?——No, Madam, returned I, with a sigh: no; your goodness, your love to me shuts your eyes against those reasons which ought absolutely to break off this marriage. And I conjure you by the favours with which you have loaded me; by that eternal gratitude I have for them; by all your concern for the happiness of your son; not to press him any more on this subject, but to abandon your project. Why so huzzy, cried she, in an angry tone; for she was ready to call me names; she was provoked out of mere tenderness. Why so, pray? what do you mean? Oh! mamma; you ought to think no more of it, cried I, throwing myself suddenly at her feet. I lose riches and honours, but I can't help it; they are not fit for me. Mr. de Valville can't share them with me, without rendering me the ridicule of

the world ; without passing himself for a man of a mean and base spirit. Alas ! what a misfortune would it be to this young gentleman, who is the hope of an illustrious family, who might aspire to the greatest honours, to be obliged perhaps, to desert his country, for having married a girl whom nobody knows : a girl whom you have raised from nothing ; and who has no other fortune but your charity ? could the world ever approve of such a marriage ?——But, what do you mean by these reflections ? what are you about ? cried Mrs. de Valville, interrupting me.——Pray, Madam, hear me, resumed I in a pressing and importunate tone. If any thing is worthy your concern and his, it is certainly my misery. My dear mamma, you have had hitherto the greatest regard for me, and still continue it. You would have the poor Marianne call you mother ; you do her the honour to call her your child, and treat her as if she was really so : How admirable, how kind is this ! can any thing equal your goodness ? and is not my low, my indigent condition sufficiently honoured, but you must carry your charity so far as to marry me to your son ? is my misery to be esteemed a portion ? No, my dear mother, no ; you may give me the endearing title of your daughter as long as you please, you may bestow it upon me without controul ; but I ought not to receive it from the law. It is true, I had yielded to your excessive goodness ; I thought I had surmounted all obstacles, and every thing wou'd pass on smooth and easy ; the excess of my happiness prevented my thinking, and had taken away all my scruples ; but they return upon me, and I can no longer hide from myself the true state of things. Every body cries out against our marriage. Mr. de Valville is affronted, rallied, and persecuted, wherever he goes :

goes: tho' he conceals it from me, and durst not tell it you, he is shocked at the frightful prospect, and has reason to be so; but tho' he should regard all this with indifference, and endeavour to overlook it; I ought to mind it for my own sake as well as his. In short you love me; your intention is to secure my happiness, and yet I should disappoint all the designs of your tenderness by consenting to marry him; designs which I ought to revere, and which deserve to meet with success. How can I be happy if he is not so too; if I see myself hated and despised? as I foresee I must be. Lord! I be hated! —

HERE I was stopped by a torrent of tears. Val-who during my discourse had appeared as if he was going to interrupt me, as soon as I had finished, arose suddenly with an air of the most violent agitation, and went out of the hall without any body desiring him to stay, or asking him the reason of his going. Mrs. de Valville continued immoveable. Mrs. Dorfin appeared dull and pensive, and fixed her eyes on the floor. Miss Varthon, more uneasy than ever at what she feared I would say, endeavoured to assume a countenance that might not betray her. So that we were all of us from different motives unable to speak. As for me, weakened by this violent effort, I let myself sink upon Mrs. de Valville's knee, and continued crying. The two ladies were for some time speechless after Mr. de Valville was gone. Daughter, said my mamma at last, with an air of consternation, does my son love you no more? I only answered her by a fresh flood of tears, with which she mingled her's; and a look that made her sensible she had discovered the cause of my uneasiness. Mrs. Dorfin seemed extremely moved, and wept too. Miss Varthon sighed a little, and this was for some time

the tone of our conversation, which was succeeded by a perfect silence ; but Mrs. de Valville at last bursting afresh into tears, took me in her arms, and moved me so much by her tenderness and affection, that I was unable to contain myself, or to support the weight of my own sorrow. Come, my dear daughter, said she, come, endeavour to comfort your self. Believe me, my dear, thou hast still a mother: dost thou esteem her as nothing?——Alas! 'tis she I regret, returned I, with a voice interrupted with sighs——Ah! why dost thou regret her, returned she? she is, if possible, more thy mother than ever. And I a thousand times more her friend, returned Mrs. Dorfin, in a resolute voice, but with her eyes full of tears: and indeed it is not her that I pity, it is Mr. de Valville, his loss is infinitely greater than her's. Now I have done with him, I shall never esteem him any more, returned my dear mamma; but Marianne, how didst thou learn that he loves another, added she: who gave thee that information, he could not tell it thee himself? Do you know the person for whom he thus breaks thro' his engagements? who is it that he can think worthy of being preferred before thee? Can she hope to retain him? tell me, hast thou heard who she is? You will know without doubt, Madam; returned I, he ought to tell you that himself, and I beg you would excuse me from saying any more. Miss, resumed Mrs. de Valville, addressing herself to my rival; my daughter is your friend, and I am persuaded has told it you. 'Tis likely she has trusted you with the whole. Is she not mistaken? is there any proof that he is really unfaithful? I have sometimes sent Valville to your convent, is it there that he became inspired with this new, this strange passion?

IN the situation Miss Varthon was in, she must have been older and more conversant with the world than she was, to have been proof against a question of this nature. She was at once unable to keep her countenance, and blushed in such a remarkable manner, that the two ladies were immediately satisfied, that she was the person. I understand you, Miss, said Mrs. de Valville; you are indeed extremely amiable, but after what has happened to my daughter, I can't advise you to depend much on the heart of my son. I did not expect either your comparison or advice, Madam, returned Miss Varthon, with a haughtiness that recovered her from her embarrassment. As to your son, all I think of his love is that it offends me; and I should have imagined that you must have thought so too. But it is very late, Madam, and time to return to the convent. Will you be so good as to send me back?

I SHALL wait upon you thither myself, Miss, said Mrs. de Valville; and then turning to Mrs. Dorfin, you won't leave us so soon, added she, I am going to order the horses to be set to the coach; and shall return in a quarter of an hour, and expect to find you here with Marianne. With all my heart, Madam, said Mrs. Dorfin. My dear mamma, cried I, with a voice still very faint, I never knew a greater pleasure than being with you; it will always be my happiness, and I shall now never wish to enjoy any other: But Mr. de Valville will return to-night; and if you would not have me lose my life, don't expose me again to the pain of seeing him, at least so soon. I know, mamma, how sincerely you love me; and it is your affection, your tender heart I would spare. You must believe what I say now is very true, since by warning you, I deprive myself of all the

consolation of being with you. But when Mr. de Valville is married, I shall find no other charm in life, but the pleasure of being with my dear mamma. She is in the right, returned Mrs. Dorfin, while Mrs. de Valville was drying her eyes. This adventure is too fresh; let us carry her back to her convent. On which the latter went to give her orders, and soon after we went out. Never, perhaps, were four people together more serious and silent than we were, for scarce were four words spoke in the way from my mamma's to the convent. 'Tis true the situation Miss Varthon and I were in, could not allow of a very brisk conversation: nothing was lively amongst us, but my glances at Mrs. de Valville, and her's at me. At last we arrived. My rival stepped out of the coach first; Mrs. de Valville and I followed, and Mrs. Dorfin, who loaded me with caresses, and assurances of friendship, staid behind. Miss Varthon, who longed to get rid of us, rang the bell, and returned her thanks to my mother in a cold but polite manner, and the gate being opened she left us. I cast myself into Mrs. de Valville's arms, where I remained some time, speechless, and ready to faint. Hide thy tears, said she, to me whispering; it is with difficulty that I retain mine. Farewell, think that thou shalt for ever be my daughter; and that thou possessest the first place in my heart. I will come to see thee again tomorrow. This she said with the most dejected countenance. After this, I entered with my soul more softened than afflicted. And, indeed, I had reason to be so. I left Mrs. de Valville oppressed with grief; Mrs. Dorfin had just affectionately embraced me with tears in her eyes; my unfaithful lover was troubled himself, and had given us a sufficient proof of it, by leaving us so abruptly.

Thus

Thus my adventure had moved three persons who were infinitely dear to me: my affairs became theirs, and this was a pleasing subject of consolation. I did not appear destitute of help. Their tears honoured mine. They were sorry for my affliction, grieved for what I grieved; and sympathized in all my sorrow. These ideas were extremely sweet, and made me weep less from any real uneasiness, than from the most pleasing sentiments of tenderness and gratitude. But to proceed.

I PASSED the rest of the evening with my friend the nun. You will easily conceive that I did not see Miss Varthon, and that the friendly commerce that had been begun between us was entirely broken. However she thought that the discretion I had made use of in concealing her share in my adventure deserved some acknowledgment. At nine o'clock the next morning a lay-sister brought me a letter from her. I opened it, a little uneasy at what might be the contents; but it contained only a compliment upon my proceedings the day before: and as near as I can remember, it was as follows:

Miss,

“ **W**HAT you did for me yesterday was so
“ very obliging, that I should reproach
“ myself, if I did not return you my sincerest
“ thanks for it. It was not your fault if the share
“ I had in your grief did not remain a secret: for
“ notwithstanding the extreme trouble and dis-
“ order of your mind, you did not let a word
“ escape you, that could in the least expose me.
“ A very generous proceeding indeed! and such
“ as none but you could have been capable of.
“ The result of this adventure will shew you
how

“how much I am touched with it. Adieu
“Miss,” &c.

You will soon see what this proof was that she engaged herself to give me. I returned her an answer by the same lay-sister: which was very short, and was as follows:

“I AM obliged to you, Miss, for your com-
“pliment; but you owe me none: I don’t
“think I deserve any praise for not being ill-
“natured. I acted only according to my
“own character, and expect no reward for
“it.”

Mrs. de Valville had promised me the evening before, that she would come and see me, and she was as good as her word. We spoke of Miss Varthon, and as all my engagements with Valville were now broken, I made no difficulty of telling her in what manner I became acquainted with his infidelity; and I did it to the advantage of my rival, whose dispositions I could not then inform her of. My narration made us both weep. And the expressions of our mutual tenderness exceeded all description. She had no news to tell me from Valville, for he had not shewn himself since the moment he left us. However, he returned home, but not till it was very late, and that morning he set out either for the country or Versailles. Doubtless, said she, he avoids seeing me, and I am persuaded is ashamed to appear before me. On this she got up and was going to leave me, when Miss Varthon, whom neither of us expected to see, suddenly came in. I intended to write to you, Madam, said she to my mother, after saluting her; but since you are here, and I may have the honour

honour to speak to you, it is better I think to let it alone, and tell you my mind, without giving you or myself any farther trouble. I shall not detain you very long. Mr. de Valville is changed; you believe I am the cause; and I have reason to think so too. But, how have I contributed to his inconstancy? This, Madam, it is necessary you should know. I should be sorry to have you deceived in an affair of such consequence; and I shall therefore tell you the whole with the strictest truth. The first time Mr. de Valville saw me, was when I fainted away, at parting from my mamma. You was so kind as to lend me your assistance, and he too endeavoured to bring me to myself. I entered the convent with this lady, whom I had but just known, and who became my friend: but she neither mentioned you, Madam, nor Mr. de Valville; nor told me upon what terms she was with him. — I know it, Miss, said my mother, interrupting her. Marianne has just told me every thing; and has done you all the justice that you could expect from her. My son came to pay you a visit; he presented my service to you; he gave you a letter as he left you; and told you it came from me: you believed him and took it, and any body else would have done so too. Besides, you made no secret of it; but gave it to this lady as soon as you knew she was interested in it: so I see no reason why you ought to disturb yourself. If my son found you amiable, and has presumed to tell you so, it is not your fault. You have no otherwise contributed to it, than by having charms, which it is not in your power to divest yourself of; and you are quite out of the case even according to the relation Marianne gives of it. — This account is much to her honour,

and

and I should not perhaps be treated so gently by any body else, returned Miss Varthon, with the tears in her eyes, in spite of her endeavours to prevent them: and what I have further to add, is to desire you to be so kind as to oblige Mr. de Valville to endeavour to see me no more. It would be to no purpose, and would only shew his want of regard to me. You are in the right, Miss, returned my mother, he would be quite inexcusable; and I will let him know it. Not that I should not be the first to wish for an alliance like yours; which to be sure would do us a great deal of honour; but my son is unworthy of it: his inconstancy shocks me: and tho' he should be so happy as to please you, I should be afraid in giving him to you, that I made you a very bad present. I will let him know how disagreeable his visits are to you; and I hope he will give you no reason to complain. Miss Varthon made no other reply, but a curtesy and then retired.

SHE imagined, perhaps, that I should applaud the resolution she had taken to see him no more; and that I should look upon it as a proof of that acknowledgment she had promised me; but far from it: I was not so easily deceived. This was only a pretended acknowledgment; but no proof at all of her gratitude. What could she risk by refusing to see Valville at the convent? had she not the marchioness of Kilnare's house for a resource? was not Valville one of this lady's friends? did not he frequently visit her there? All this shew of a noble generosity in her behaviour, was only a vain ostentation which signified nothing: and you will see in the sequel, that I then reasoned very justly. But to return to myself.

I WAS born for a multiplicity of adventures, and my stars would not suffer me long to be with-
out

out them : I am now a little at leisure, but it will not last long. My mother continued to come and see me : but Valville, always absent, never came with her. Miss Varthon and I met in the convent ; but we only gave each other a transient salute without speaking. About four or five days after our dining with Mrs. de Valville, I received in the morning a very extraordinary visit. But I must begin, Madam, by telling you what it was that procured it me. Mrs. Dorfin had been that morning to see Mrs. de Valville ; she found there an old friend of the family, an officer who was a person of quality, and a little advanced in years. He had heard much of me, on account of my adventure at the prime minister's, and had never seen my mother, without asking news of Marianne, of whom he was continually making encomiums, founded on what he had heard of me. The noise of my disgrace was already abroad ; and Valville's infidelity publickly known. Perhaps he himself, since he had left his mother's, had told it to some of his best friends, who had also trusted the secret to others.——However, this gentleman had heard of it, and came to Mrs. de Valville's in order to be certainly informed of the truth. Madam, said he, there is a report that Mr. de Valville is no longer in love with that amiable girl, who is so worthy of every one's esteem ; they say he has left her, and refuses to marry her. How is it possible that he should cease loving that Marianne, who was so dear to him, and so worthy of being so ? I can hardly believe it, and probably it is only a calumny. Alas ! Sir, it is but too true, returned Mrs. de Valville, with an air of grief ; and I am quite inconsolable. Indeed, returned he, you have reason to be so. It would have been the highest comfort to you to have been the mother
of

of that engaging child. It would have been an acquisition that would have secured the repose of your life. What can Mr. de Valville mean? is he afraid of being too happy?——I shall pass over the rest of their conversation on this subject. Mrs. de Valville was going to dine with Mrs. Dorfin; and this last lady engaged the officer to attend them, and added that I must come too, on account of the extreme desire he expressed to see me. But as it was yet very early, the ladies did not care to go so soon; however, they thought I ought to be informed of it: I will send, said my mother, to her convent, to tell her that we shall take her with us in our way. There is no need of sending, replied the officer; I have a little business that way, and if you will give me leave, I will wait upon her myself: only give me a short note for her, or else perhaps I may not be able to gain admission. On which she wrote immediately,

Dear Daughter,

“ I SHALL call upon you at one o'clock and
 “ I take you with me. We dine at Mrs.
 “ Dorfin's.”

WITH this short passport, the officer arrived at the convent. He asked for me from Mrs. de Valville, and I came down. Some of the boarders had told me they would that afternoon come to keep me company in my chamber, so that notwithstanding my grief, I happened to be dressed less negligently than ordinary. These are little regards which don't seem to cost us the least reflection. It is true that my mind was dejected: but what then, my vanity did not subside; but still performed its office. It is necessary to repair on one

side, what our afflictions destroy on the other; for in short we are not willing to lose all.

I ENTERED the parlour, and saw a man of about fifty, he had a good mien, and an air of distinction; was well dressed, tho' plain, and had a countenance extremely frank and open. Let our natural politeness be ever so great, we no sooner see persons, whose appearance prepossess us in their favour, than we give them a reception peculiarly engaging. With the one we are only courteous and obliging; but with the other free and affable; and this disposition takes such sudden hold of our minds, that we have scarcely time to take notice of it. This was the situation of my mind the moment I saw this gentleman; my looks of complacency were returned by his which expressed the same regard; and he could not possibly have shewn a higher satisfaction. I waited till he spoke to me. Miss said he (after a low bow, and presenting me the note from my mother) Mrs. de Valville desired me to give you this. She wanted to send some body with it, and I entreated her to give me the preference. You do me a great deal of honour, Sir, returned I, opening the note, which I soon read. Well, Sir, added I, Mrs. de Valville shall find me ready, and I return you a thousand thanks, for the trouble you have given yourself. I ought to thank Mrs. de Valville for having permitted me to wait on you, replied he; but Miss, it is not late, and the ladies will not soon be here. May I, by the favour of the commission I have obtained, hope to enjoy a quarter of an hour's conversation with you? I have been a long time a friend to Mrs. de Valville and her family; I am to dine with you, so you may regard me beforehand as one of your acquaintance, since I shall be no stranger to you two hours hence.

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As you please, Sir, replied I, much surprized at his discourse. You may speak, I am ready to hear you. I won't keep you long in suspense, Miss, returned he, about what I have to say to you. I have the reputation of a man of honour, and a sincere, sociable, honest, plain-dealer: ever since I have heard of your character you have been the object of my esteem, my respect, my admiration. This I assure you, Miss, is strictly true. I am informed of your affairs. Mr. de Valville, unhappily for himself, is guilty of inconstancy. I am my own master, Miss; enjoy an estate of twenty five thousand livres a year; and I offer it to you. It shall be at your service whenever you please, after you have consulted with Mrs. de Valville upon it. What most surprized me in this proposal was the rapidity with which it was delivered, and the engaging frankness which accompanied every thing he said. I had seldom seen any body so worthy of being listened to, as this agreeable gentleman; his soul seemed to speak to me; methought I saw it; it addressed itself to mine, and demanded an answer, as simple and natural as the question it had proposed to me. Therefore, laying aside all ceremony, I conformed myself to his behaviour, and without trifling away any time in returning him thanks, I asked him if he knew my history. Yes, I do, Miss, returned he: and that is the reason, why you see me here: it is that that has told me you are more valuable than all the world possesses besides, and it is that which has attached me to you. You surprize me, Sir, returned I, your manner of thinking is very rare. I don't know how to praise it; because it is too much to my advantage: to all appearance, you are a person of quality? Yes, returned he, I forgot to mention that; but it is not in my opinion a thing

thing very material. It is the honest man, and not the man of quality, who can merit you, Miss; and as I think myself as honest as any other person, I imagined this qualification joined to an estate, which is more than enough to satisfy our desires, and make us easy, might induce you to accept of my offers. I ought not to hesitate, returned I, upon the value I ought to set upon your proposal, which is a mark of the highest esteem, and the greatest generosity; but permit me to repeat my question; have you well considered it? I have nothing; I don't know to whom I owe my birth; I have subsisted from my cradle only on the charity of strangers, and have many times been in danger of becoming an object of public charity. This has shocked Mr. de Valville, notwithstanding the inclination he had for me.——Take care, Sir.

——'Tis the worse for him, Miss, returned he: this will never be looked upon as the most glorious part of his conduct. However, you will have nothing like this to fear from me. Mr. de Valville loved you; but it was not that passion which brought me hither. I heard you represented as most perfectly lovely; but we are not apt to be affected by charms we have never seen, and know only by relation. So it is not a lover that comes to see you, it is much better. Is a person of your merit, fit to be made the sport of a foolish and inconstant passion? No, Miss, no. Let people fall in love with you the first moment they see you: let them love you with the tenderest affection; how can they avoid it? I feel the same passion, and I find that I am actually in love; but I need not that to be charmed with you; the amiable qualities of your mind have been able to attract my highest esteem; your beauty indeed is an additional qualification, which tho' not necessary to engage my regards,

regards, which were before founded on a more solid basis, yet, I can't be offended at it, because the excess of that happiness I would enjoy can't be supposed to extirpate my desire of obtaining it. It was my reason that made me give you my heart, and I brought no other passion with me. Thus my affection does not depend upon a transport which is liable to wear off, and subject to change. My reason is not concerned about a fortune, since I have enough for us both; nor about your relations, since they would be nothing to me. I am not concerned about your family, for if you were of royal extraction, would it add any thing to your personal merit? — besides, have souls any difference of relation? are they not all derived from the same original? it is your mind then I would obtain; 'tis your virtue alone that has the most powerful charms; which I can never possess without being obliged to make you all possible returns. Should you consent to marry me, I should esteem myself infinitely obliged to you. My love is too excessive for me to dare to desire you to return it in the same degree. You are hardly twenty and I almost fifty: and you would think me very weak was I to desire you to love me. But as to your friendship and esteem, I must hope to attain them both; as I shall endeavour to deserve them: and as you are reasonable and generous, I flatter myself with success. This is what I had to say to you, Miss; I now only wait to know what is your determination. Sir, said I, if I only consulted the honour you would do me in my present situation, and the good opinion you give me of yourself, I should immediately accept of your proposal; but I must desire eight days time to consider of it; both for your sake and mine. I shall think for you, as you would marry a person, who is nothing,

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and has not any thing to recommend her ; and the same reasons will induce me to consider it well on my own account, because they equally regard us both. Let me entreat you, Sir, to employ this time in examining these things more closely than you have done, and with all the attention you are capable of. You esteem me, you say, very highly, and your present disposition make you set this above all other considerations. But I am not yet yours, Sir ; and we should be no sooner married, but your conduct would be censured, you would be rallied on my unknown extraction, and want of fortune. Can you be insensible and unconcerned at their banters and reproaches ? will you not be sorry for having allied yourself to no family ; and for not increasing your fortune, by your marriage. These things you ought to consider of maturely : as I shall reflect what would be the consequence, should you repent of your precipitation. But tho' these motives of reflection should not keep me in suspense, I cannot have the liberty of giving you the proof you desire of my gratitude, without Mrs. de Valville's consent. I am her daughter ; nay, more than her daughter. For 'tis to her goodness alone, and not to nature, that I owe the blessing of having her for my mother. Her generosity, her noble, her boundless generosity made her assume that title, and indulge the most tender care and affection for me. So that I am bound to be entirely at her disposal. And I am persuaded you will think I have reason to be so. I must therefore, Sir, acquaint her with your offers, which I shall do without telling her your name, unless you permit me to do it. O ! just as you please, Miss, returned he ; I shall use so little care to keep it secret, that I shall take a pride in publishing my design : and I am sure that all
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men of sense will esteem me the better for it, even tho' you should refuse me : But it is time I should leave you ; the ladies will be here in an hour at farthest, and I shall wait for you at Mrs. Dorfin's. Farewell, Miss, I shall make reflections since you desire it ; but I shall not be in pain about those which may be made upon me, your's alone are capable of disturbing me. This day sen'night about this time I shall be here again to know the result of them and Mrs. de Valville's sentiments, which perhaps, may be in my favour.

THIS said, he retired ; and I made him no other answer but a courtesy, which was accompanied with an air of the greatest affability and gratitude. I then immediately went up into my room, and made haste to dress me. The ladies soon arrived, I stepped into the coach, dined at Mrs. Dorfin's, and returned home very late, without having mentioned my adventure with the officer to Mrs. de Valville. Shall I see you again soon, mamma? said I to her. I shall come again to-morrow in the afternoon, returned she, embracing me ; and then we parted. That night I spoke to nobody but my friend the nun, I unbosomed myself to her, and told her all that had passed between the officer and me, at which she seemed agreeable surprized, and I concluded with desiring her to come and see me in the morning. She entered the room the next day before I was awake, at which she was going to retire, when by her pulling the door after her I opened my eyes, called her back, and desired her to take a chair and seat herself by my bed-side : My dear friend, said I, I have for some days had a design to retire from the world, and fix myself for the rest of my life, in that serene and tranquil state you have embraced.——How ! would you be a nun? cried she, interrupting me.——Yes, returned I

my life is subject to too many events; I find every thing uncertain and precarious. Valville's infidelity has given me a disgust to the world; I find he is still too dear to my heart, and I must not, I dare not see him more. Providence has favoured me with enough to settle me here; my deed of gift will secure to me this peaceful retreat, where I shall live with you in a perfect repose, without being at any one's expence. Any other but me, she returned, would immediately applaud your resolution; but I am too much your friend to advise you to pursue your inclinations, where I foresee they would be followed by repentance. When we can have a day entirely to ourselves, I will give you the history of my life; you will then be more able to form a judgment of your own situation: And if after that you persist in your intention of taking the veil, you will be more sensible of the importance of your engagements.——But it is time, Madam, for me to break off; I am sufficiently fatigued, and must therefore make you wait a little longer for the continuation of my adventures.

The End of the EIGHTH PART.

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THE
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART IX.

YOUR commendations, dear Madam, of my generous behaviour to my unfaithful lover, so agreeably flatter my vanity, that I can't help expressing my acknowledgments. We are all of us naturally fond of applause, as it is a kind of proof that we have some reason for that complacency with which we are apt to regard our own actions. Self-love is the universal spring that moves in every breast, the reigning principle which governs the soul, and gives laws to those actions which peculiarly regard ourselves. The mind that is actuated by the low prospects of sensual pleasure, and that which is animated by a love of virtue, and the refined delight which attends the practice of great actions, proceed in some measure upon the same principle, a refined or a groveling self-love; we all pant after happiness, and tho' we take different measures to obtain it, 'tis that alone we pursue. — But to proceed with my history.

You remember I suppose that I had given my friend the nun an account of my adventure with the officer, that I had told her my desire of taking the veil, and that she had earnestly persuaded me
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against it. Her warmth and seriousness on this subject at once surprized and alarmed me; I thought her before perfectly happy, and I had reason to think so; for she always appeared to have a mind full of tranquility; but now I began to fear I was mistaken; I longed to hear the history of her life, but as Mrs. de Valville was to be there in the afternoon, and it would be soon time for me to dress, she desired me to defer it. I have a great variety of adventures to relate, said she, and I ought to take some time to recollect myself. I arose, with a mind more calm than it had been for some time past. She endeavoured to divert my thoughts from Valville, by mentioning the happiness I might expect from a union with the generous officer; his sentiments I find, said she, are too noble, too agreeable to your's, not to make you charmed with him; he will at once be a tender husband, a father and a friend; his good sense will render him always engaging, you will forget his years, and in short return his passion. You will find your esteem gradually strengthen and grow up to love. Alas! my friend, returned I, you are quite mistaken: I find Valville, my dear, my unfaithful Valville, has still the entire possession of my heart, and I can feel no room there for any other object. I confess the gentleman you mention has inspired me with the highest esteem; his open frankness at our first interview, and his conversation at Mrs. Dorin's, have rendered me highly sensible of his merit; but it is a sensibility very different from the tenderness of love. He inspires me with a regard, much like the reverence which is due to a father. I shall be glad of his friendship, and shall readily give him every proof of mine; every proof that the strictest virtue, and my unconquerable love to Valville will allow.

allow. Marianne, replied my friend, Valville has rendered himself unworthy of this tenderness, indeed you are too constant, considering his infidelity; but however, it is possible he may return to you again, and love you with more fondness than ever. I don't think I have any reason to cherish such flattering hopes, returned I, with a sigh; I have no expectations of that kind; and tho' I despair of conquering my passion, I must endeavour to do it. His cold and constrained looks pierce thro' my soul: his indifference is insupportable, and absence alone must fortify my mind, and enable me to repulse that flood of tenderness which flows in upon it, whenever I think of him.

HERE a lay-sister entered with my breakfast, and told the nun that the ladies waited for her below. I had no sooner eat a little, than I dressed in order to receive Mrs. de Valville: at last she arrived; but methought she looked out of order, a languid paleness was spread over her face; and all the marks of a real illness was visible there. How do you do, my dear? said she, as soon as I entered the parlour. I find I shall not be able to stay long with thee to-day, for I am not well. I see it mamma, returned I, with a look full of tenderness. Pray, what is the matter? I don't know, returned she; I have not been perfectly well for some time; but, come, don't afflict thyself, added she, seeing me ready to weep; I shall soon recover. My son's infidelity I think is unpardonable; it is always uppermost in my mind. — I am provoked at it to the highest degree: I have just found out an intrigue that has completed my indignation, and equally surprized and shocked me. I had no sooner got home last night from Mrs Dorlin's, than I was told a letter from
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Versailles directed to my son, had been left there, and that my servants were ordered to give it him as soon as possible ; but as I imagined he was gone thither himself, and could not tell whether it might not contain something relating to his post which might be of importance enough to require me to send it after him, I resolved to break it open: however, I sent it first to my country-house, that it might be given him if he was there ; but this morning the man returned, and brought it back with the news, that he set out for Versailles yesterday, on which I went into my closet, opened and read it. I have brought it to thee my dear ; it would shock my delicacy too much to read it to thee, added she, pulling it out of her pocket : thou shalt thy self be a witness of his ungenerous proceedings, and I hope it will enable thee to overcome thy passion ; for when thou hast entirely ceased to esteem him, thou wilt soon cease to love him too. I opened it, and found the following lines :

SIR,

“ I CAN no longer avoid disposing of my commission ; I am not at all pleased with your delays and those of your friends. As I am resolved to spend the rest of my days in a peaceful retirement from noise and business, I think every day an age that keeps me from my country seat. I have settled all my affairs, and am resolved to be there in a few days. You cannot blame me if I dispose of my post to another, since if it had not been your own fault, you might have been in possession of it long ago. I am, &c.

I HAD no sooner read it over to myself; but I sighed, let fall some tears, and was unable to speak: when Mrs. de Valville resumed: How ill he repays my tenderness! ungrateful, unworthy man! I am resolved he shall be sensible of my resentment——Dear mamma, cried I, interrupting her, and throwing myself at her feet, don't sink me into despair. I can't bear to think of your using him unkindly upon my account. Let me entreat you not to oppose his happiness. He has too much reason to forsake me: —— I don't complain of him, he was perhaps born to enjoy a happiness superior to that which I could bestow upon him: he has a soul sensible of the nicest honour, a soul which will not suffer him to do an action, that would bring upon him as much disgrace and contempt as if he had been guilty of the blackest crime. Would you have him insensible of the remonstrances of his friends? would you have him regardless of their contempt and scorn? and would you suffer me to be the cause of all that ignominy, that would fall upon you both? no, Madam, it was I alone, that was to blame; it is I alone that you ought to be offended with; I have dared to presume upon your goodness, and dazzled with the pleasing prospect that lay before me, have encouraged a passion, which must necessarily have drawn after it the most fatal, the most dreadful consequences. Let me entreat you to reinstate him in your favour; to approve of his new passion; and suffer me to look upon him as my brother. I will never leave you till you forgive him. You must either forgive him or kill me. The reflection of my causing a breach between you would be too much for me to support.

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HERE my tears prevented my saying any more : my dear mother wept too, and we both were silent for some moments, we wiped our eyes, and then she cried out: Oh! my daughter! how generous is this! would you persuade me to pardon him! you, whom he has injured, persuade me to return him my affection! was he sensible of thy behaviour I am sure it must chase every other passion from his breast; he will never find another like you.——Yes, Madam, as I am the cause of his offending you, I ought to be the first that endeavours after a reconciliation. Think, mamma, how amiable has been his character hitherto, and then consider if one action ought to destroy that esteem which he has been raising for many years. My dear, returned she, with an affecting look that darted thro' her tears, thy goodness has overcome me; thou hast raised all the mother in my breast; and since thou canst forgive him, sure I ought to do so too. I sincerely thank you, mamma, returned I, but this is not all, you must give him your consent to marry Miss Varthou; I had once the prospect of spending my life in the pleasing toil of promoting his felicity; of industriously pursuing every means to increase his love, and augment his happiness. But I must forever lay aside these transporting hopes, and can only use my entreaties, that you would permit him to be blessed by a lady, who is more happy than I deserve to be. Consider, Madam, he is your son, consider how great has been your tenderness for him, and how well he has deserved an esteem, which no considerations for me ought ever to supersede, and then I am sure you will deny him nothing. His only crime is indulging an involuntary passion; but his concealing it from you, can only prove that he fears to give

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you pain ; that he dreads, that as an evil which he most earnestly desires to avoid : he has been afraid you should push things to extremities, and therefore rather than offend you, has declined accepting of an advantageous post. And chuses rather to refuse those honours that he might easily obtain, than give you an uneasy moment.——

Enough, my dear, enough, she returned with an engaging smile: you make use of the very motives of my resentment, to procure a reconciliation ; I did not consider his behaviour in throwing in obstacles to retard his preferment in the light thou dost. He is still my son, and he shall find that I have all the affection of a mother. I will endeavour to see him as soon as he returns to Paris: I'll tell him I still persist in my resolution to contribute all I can to render him happy, and as you desire it, I consent that he shall chuse his own way of being so. But at the same time I will let him know what he owes to you, and if he has any remains of generosity and ingenuity, your goodness I am sure must fill him with admiration, and make him resume all his former tenderness for you. Dear mamma, replied I, don't flatter me with such vain, such delusive expectations, they are too agreeable to me ; I dare not indulge them. Yet notwithstanding I could not help thinking there was some reason for her opinion ; it is not impossible, said I immediately to my self, but he may be sensible how much he is obliged to me ; he may be charmed with the disinterestedness of my passion: This reflection gave me a most sensible pleasure, and I could not help representing my dear Valville to my mind in a suppliant posture, intreating forgiveness, and saying the most tender things.

My dear mamma arose up and was going to leave me when I desired her to stay a little longer. I then repeated all that passed between the officer and me, when he paid me a visit a few days before. She smiled, and seemed extremely pleased. Well, cried she, as soon as I had done; I could not help observing something in his behaviour afterwards at Mrs. Dorfin's, that rendered him more than ordinary engaging; nay, that lady, added she, gave me a hint that she fancied you had made him your captive. He seemed peculiarly desirous of rendering himself agreeable to you. And we both observed that his looks were continually fixed upon you, and that you hardly ever spoke but his eyes sparkled with a pleasing vivacity. But you don't tell me what is your resolution: he is a man of great merit, and has a delicacy and elevation of mind, that must render him very valuable in your esteem. He has a way of thinking almost peculiar to himself. In short, he is a very extraordinary person, and I persuade myself that a conformity of sentiments will soon render your tenderness reciprocal. What do you resolve? won't he possess that place in your heart, which my son has so justly forfeited? I shall make no difficulty, mamma, of telling you the situation of my mind, returned I; I have a very great esteem for him: his frankness and generosity, his good sense and virtue, make me look upon him as a person that deserves my friendship; but Mr. de Valville has still the possession of my heart: I find he is too dear to me, not to regret his loss as a most severe affliction. His infidelity has not made me love him less, but on the contrary, it has rather encreased my tenderness: indeed I did not think he had been so very dear to me as I find he is. Tho' I am obliged to give my new lover all the esteem he deserves,

yet I can't help looking upon him with a respectful kind of awe, which will even prevent my loving him with that tenderness which is due to a husband; and while Valville is unmarried, I can never bear to think of entering into engagements which must render it impossible for him to be mine. I can only advise you, my dear, said she, to consult your own breast; and to endeavour to be as serene as possible: a virtue like thine must one day meet with its reward. But farewell, I shall see you again in two or three days time, added she, putting as many of her fingers as she could thro' the grate, which I took hold of and kissed with a respectful tenderness. She then repeated her assurances of an eternal affection for me and retired.

SHE left me in a situation not to be expressed; I reflected with pleasure on my having reconciled Mrs. de Valville to her son. My generous behaviour suspended my uneasiness, and I felt a delightful harmony in my breast, which every thought seemed to increase. All peaceful, serene and composed, full of self applause, full of the satisfaction which reason approves and heightens, I felt a delight which was more exquisite, more sublime, than can be imagined. How unlike the mad transports of jealous rage, which disturbs, and tortures, and racks the soul! which fills the mind with a thousand contending passions, and can only be followed by remorse and disappointment. But I had taken the sweetest method of revenge; a revenge which was most likely to meet with success, and wound my unfaithful lover, in the tenderest and most sensible part. I foresaw that my behaviour would cover him with shame, and make him reflect how little I deserved to be disregarded by him, who could forfeit all my hopes

hopes to promote his happiness. At last Mrs. de Valville's indisposition came into my mind, and immediately gave a damp to my satisfaction. However, I flattered myself that she would soon recover, and with this hope regained my tranquility.

I SAW my benefactress almost every day; but alas! she appeared in such a declining condition, that her presence always filled me with the most cruel alarms. She seemed indeed more nearly attached to me than ever, her tenderness exceeded all bounds, and her own soul appeared to be entirely taken up with her affection for me, and to be filled with the sincerest concern for my happiness. When the day appeared in which I expected to see the officer I dressed and prepared to receive him; but he was in the parlour sooner than I expected. However, I did not make him wait long. I went down to him with a mind a little discomposed at the apprehensions of the pain I should give him. After the usual compliments were over, you see, Miss, said he, with an air of gaiety, that I have kept to your appointment; I have deliberately reflected upon all the consequences that may attend our union, and have not been able to find one that can for a moment shake my resolution: may I hope to have a share in your friendship, in that sincere and tender friendship, which must render the indissoluble knot for ever sweet and full of charms? all I wait for now is to know the result of your reflections. Sir, returned I, I shall make no difficulty of telling you my mind with the utmost freedom. Your behaviour, your generosity, your unexceptionable character have given me a very high opinion of your merit; and I ought to esteem your proposal as a very great honour; but I find I can't enter into any new engagements. Valville,

tho' unfaithful is still dear to me : however, your friendship is too desirable not to make me earnestly wish for the continuance of it ; and I shall think myself very happy, if after this you grant me a share in your esteem. I observed while I spoke, a visible concern spread over his countenance, and after I had done, he stood some moments in a thoughtful posture, without making any reply ; at last he recovered himself, and with an engaging, tho' sorrowful air, assured me, that since he must not hope to be so happy as he could wish, he would gladly embrace every opportunity to serve me, and that I should always find him my sincerest and most affectionate friend. And in that character he hoped I would sometimes permit him to see me at my mother's or Mrs. Dorfin's. This request was too reasonable to be denied him. I readily consented to it : and on this he left me.

FOR three days after this I heard no news of my mother ; on the fourth in the morning a lay-sister entered my apartment, and told me that a coach was waiting for me in the court, with a servant from Mrs. de Valville ; on which I dressed and went down. I found one of her maids at the door with a letter in which she told me she was at her country-house, and longed to see me there. She had delivered another letter to the abbess, so I had nothing to do but to get into the coach : I did so, and soon arrived at my mamma's. She received me with her usual affection. I should have thought myself extremely happy in being near her, if her increasing disorder had not filled me with the utmost inquietude ; a soft languishment appeared in her eyes ; and her countenance, pale and sickly, made me fear I should soon be deprived of all the comfort, all the repose of my life. Val-

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ville's infidelity had hitherto given me the severest pain; but now my affliction for his mother made me forget every other cause of grief. I struggled with myself to put on before her a countenance as serene as possible; but whenever I was from her, I fought to be alone; I then gave a loose to my sorrow, and uttered the severest complaints. Oh! why have I tasted, said I, melting into tears, the sweet, the delightful satisfaction that springs from a filial affection to the dearest, the best of mothers, if I must so soon feel her loss? why was I made happy to be sunk the deeper in despair. Oh! my God, then cried I, support my mind against the agonizing torture that flows in upon it; fill my soul with fortitude, and may I never, never offend thee by repining at thy providence.—— O that thou wouldst but take my life for her's, and save me the anguish of lamenting her loss!

—— These reflections soon spread such a gloom over my face, as made it impossible for me to disguise my disorder from her. She resolved I should not leave her, and to dissipate my uneasiness constrained herself to assume an air of gaiety and cheerfulness; but she did not tell me she took notice of my disorder, any other way than by thus endeavouring to remove it. I was sensible of this instance of her goodness, and my heart owned the obligation and sincerely thanked her for it. But some days after observing I still had the same concern upon my spirits, she desired me to take a turn with her in the garden; on which we went to the most shady part of it, that we might enjoy the benefit of a soft breeze which played amongst the leaves, without being incommoded by the heat of the sun. We sat down upon a bench together near a cascade, whose gentle murmurs seemed to sooth the disposition of our minds.

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My daughter, said she, looking upon me with eyes full of a maternal tenderness, I cannot help taking notice of your assiduity and concern for my health. You are unwilling to leave me for a moment; and when you do, I have reason to believe that I take up all your thoughts. You return to me with your eyes red, which informs me that you have been crying; and are so disordered, that I can no longer help taking notice of it. I thought my silence, and your own reflections might make you resume your gaiety; or, at least prevail upon you to moderate your concern; but I find they have a different effect. Consider, my dear;——you need not be told that I am mortal. I freely confess I am in a consumption; and you must not wonder if you see me snatched from you. You will lose a mother whose tenderness will deserve some tears; but I shall not leave you without a friend: Mrs. Dorfin will think herself happy in having you for a companion, she will make up my loss, and return you all the affection you can bestow upon her. Dear, dear mamma, cried I, interrupting her, and lifting up my head, with the tears running down my cheeks, Mrs. Dorfin is not you! scarce could I pronounce these words for my sighs, which almost rendered them unintelligible. Here we were both silent, and sighs and groans were all that passed for some time. At last recollecting herself, and taking hold of my hand, your softness moves me too much, resumed she:——But, my dear, consider, that you must have parted with me, had I lived some years longer: our separation would then have been as severe as it is now. The sweetest pleasure I ever knew was that which sprang from communicating the blessings which heaven has bestowed upon me. A pleasure so sublime, that it gives me the highest

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The Virtuous Orphan.

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satisfaction even in the prospect of my dissolution. I shall be judged by a being whose dispositions are the same as my own : a being whom I have always loved to think on under the endearing character of a father : and a being too not swayed by prejudice, but the distributor of justice; who is as superior in his benevolence, and compassion, as the nature of God is more exalted than that of the lowest part of his rational creation. Death, my dear, by reflection grows familiar to the mind; I find it insensibly loses all its horrors; the gloom vanishes; the spectre is stripped of its terrors, and in an angel's form opens the way to boundless joys and delights unutterable! — On this side is care, and trouble, and anxiety; on that rapturous pleasures, eternal felicity, and endless peace. Here she paused, and then looking at me with eyes which expressed all the tender sentiments of her heart; My dear, added she, I confess I can't think of leaving thee without some regret; I long too to see my son, and to embrace him with that tenderness which is due from a mother to a child, to whom she must bid a long adieu. — As for thee I would persuade thee to moderate thy affliction, and arm thy self with a firmness of mind sufficient to support my loss with courage. Think wherever I am I shall love thee still. Not all the delights of heaven, tho' infinitely various, will make me forget thee: thou wilt there furnish out a pleasing subject of discourse, and I shall wish for the happy time, when I shall congratulate thee on thy arrival at that world of love, where our raptures will increase by communicating them. — O! mamma, cried I, with my eyes sparkling with soft delight; how sweetly you sooth my grief! what an engaging prospect do you lay before me! what an assemblage of

of noble and pleasing ideas! yes, our affection will be as lasting as our souls: we shall be eternally dear to each other; friendship, love and devotion, will fill our minds, and give us joys more solid than the prospect of the golden pavement, and the delicious groves crowned with immortal verdure. You have brought such a picture to my mind, that I can't help anticipating our future happiness, and imagining us possess of all that is most sweet and desirable. But don't imagine, dear mamma, that I can think of a separation from you without pain; no, it is impossible; I have reason to be highly sensible of your loss: I cannot lose the dearest friend on earth, I cannot be separated from that mind which sympathizes in all my concerns, without a cruel anguish. Life will lose all its charms, and it would require much less resolution for me to die with you than to live without you. But I will endeavour to be as calm as possible; I will reflect upon your happiness till I forget my own misery. I will set your example before my eyes, and learn from you to conquer my vanity, and all my youthful follies——

HERE we were interrupted by a servant, who came to tell us that a coach was just entered the court with Miss de Fare, on which we immediately went to receive her. She saluted us with an air that had a mixture of friendship and confusion; and was at first so much disconcerted, that she knew not how to express herself. My sincere affection for you and Miss, has constrained me, Madam, to wait upon you, said she to my mother, to enquire after your health; I am very sorry that I can't appear before you without blushing for my mother's indiscretion, tho' I am conscious I have not done any thing inconsistent with that friendship and regard I owe you both. Pray,
Miss,

Miss, returned Mrs. de Valville, don't make any apologies, for you need no justification in our esteem; you have never offended us, and your company is too agreeable for us to suffer you to spend your time in excuses, which are equally painful to us all. Let Mrs. de Fare's imprudence be forgotten. On this we went into the parlour, and discoursed the rest of the day on indifferent subjects.

At night this young lady was going to leave us, but my mother pressed her to stay two or three days with such earnestness that she could not refuse her. On which we wrote to her mamma, and sent back the coach. We spent the evening in a conversation more grave than ordinary. Tho' the arrival of this amiable lady, had given me a great deal of satisfaction, yet it could not dissipate the uneasiness in which my mind was involved at the dreadful apprehensions of losing my dear mother. That engaging lady endeavoured to enliven the discourse, but in vain; when it was time for us to go to bed, I intreated her to let me lie with her, but she would not consent to it, on account of her cough, which she thought would disturb me. In the morning Miss de Fare and I went into Mrs. de Valville's apartment; but finding her asleep, we agreed to take a walk in the fields behind the garden. As my weakness made the least disorder visible, she had observed the settled disturbance of my mind. This I easily perceived by her looks, which were expressive of a very tender and generous concern; but as she perhaps imagined that Valville's infidelity was the cause, she did not think fit to renew my uneasiness by taking notice of it. We went thro' the back gate of the garden, where a double row of tall elms extended a great length, and seemed at the further end to close and form a thick

thick grove. She endeavoured to divert me by an agreeable conversation, which was accompanied on each side with the most friendly and affectionate endearments; And so artfully suited herself to the disposition of my mind, that I could not help being exceedingly moved. We had walked a considerable way, and were talking of returning back when we saw a young woman genteely dressed with her back towards us sitting on a bench under one of the trees at a small distance before us. A little spark of curiosity made us desirous to walk on, when coming pretty near, she seemed to be lost in thought, and was in a posture expressive of the deepest despair; we crossed the walk to gain a sight of her countenance, and stood some time to observe her actions. Her eyes were at first fixed on the ground; but she soon after lifted them up to heaven, when we observed the tears trickle down her cheeks; this sight joined to some bitter sighs which escaped her, equally affected us both; we went up to her with a resolution to give her all the assistance we were capable of. I no sooner spoke, but she started and turned her head to us (for we had hitherto only a side-view of her face) and immediately arose; when we saw a countenance on which was painted a mixture of grief and shame: she was very young, her features were perfectly regular, and her eyes full of the most melting softness. May we know, Madam, the cause of your uneasiness, said I, you may depend upon our assistance, if we are happy enough to be able to serve you; we beg pardon for our intrusion; but as we were unable to see you without being moved, so we could not refrain from offering you our friendship, in order to dissipate your uneasiness as well as ours. This lady, said I, turning to Miss de Fare, I am sure feels the same affection

affection for you as I do, and will gladly contribute to remove your troubles; for the virtuous peculiarly deserve the esteem of the virtuous. Here she stood for some time silent as if in suspense, and at a loss how to behave; at last wiping her eyes, I don't know how to express the sense I have of your goodness, ladies, said she blushing, you don't know me, and if you did, I am persuaded you would lose your generous sentiments for me; permit me to retire; it is sufficient that you know I am a wretch beneath your notice. At this Miss de Fare could contain herself no longer, she took hold of her hand, and entreated her not to leave us so abruptly. We desire, Miss, said she, to know no more than you are willing to tell us. Pray, compose your self; and do us the favour to breakfast with us. Tho' it may not be in our power to serve you, oblige us with your company, and accept of our friendship. To this she consented, but not without the appearance of some reluctance. As Miss de Fare seized one of her hands, I took hold of the other; and as we began to walk back, ladies, said she, looking upon each of us with eyes full of gratitude, I am incapable of thanking you as I ought. You don't know me, and I wish I could for ever conceal my misfortunes from you, and hide the cause of my misery; but I shall no sooner be discovered, but your friendship will be turned into aversion and horror; you will then detest me as much as I do myself. Oh! may you never feel the stings of conscious guilt! added she, squeezing both our hands, and the tears gushing afresh from her eyes.

WE were extremely moved at this unexpected interview, and neither Miss de Fare nor I could refrain from weeping. I immediately went into my

my mother's room, and left Miss de Fare with the disconsolate lady below. I found her awake and ready to arise, a sweet sleep had recruited her spirits, and very much refreshed her. She received me with a smile; My child, said she, I hope Miss's company has diverted you. I am much better than I was yesterday; after breakfast we will divert ourselves; but don't be too grave. I expect Mrs. Dorbin here to-day, and don't doubt but we shall spend the time very agreeably. I expressed my joy at the alteration, which indeed was visible in her countenance, in the most lively terms. O Madam, cried I embracing her, how happy should I be, might I flatter myself with the hopes of your recovery! how delightful would be the prospect of spending my life with you!—My dear, returned she, interrupting me, my life is very precarious; learn to resign your self to the divine will; that wise, that beneficent being, who has the disposal of your life and mine, knows what is best for us both. — But where is Miss de Fare? She is below with a young stranger, said I, that we intend to introduce you; whom I hope you will find worthy of your friendship. I don't doubt it, my dear, returned she; your recommendation makes me her friend before I see her. But where did you find her? On this I related our little adventure. She seemed extremely pleased with it, and immediately dressed to wait upon her. As soon as she was ready she went into the parlour and received her with an air of the most engaging affability. But all our caresses could not disperse the gloom from her countenance; we saw that something preyed upon her spirits, and that her mind was too disordered to render it possible for her to assume an air of cheerfulness even for a moment. As soon as break-

It was over, my mother proposed taking a turn in her coach for an hour or two, to see the country, and take the benefit of the air. The unknown young lady, desired to be excused; but at our expressing an unwillingness to part with her, she consented. My dear mamma's conversation thought more lively than ever, tho' we discoursed on some subjects that were perfectly grave; but she had the art of handling the most serious topics in a manner that rendered them very engaging.

BUT, however agreeable they were to me, I am afraid, Madam, you will think them quite tedious: I have perhaps dwelt too long upon these serious discourses, which to you may appear insupportable; but for all this I have a great mind to go on with them a little further, because the thoughts may possibly be new to you. However, if you think yourself in danger of the vapours, pray pass over a few leaves and you will be infallibly out of danger. But to return;

I THINK I told you, Madam, when I drew you a portrait of my mother's heart, that her conceptions of the divine goodness and justice, were almost peculiar to herself. This conversation will shew you what ground I had for such an assertion. Nothing can be more shocking, said she, than the villainies that have been practised under the venerable name of religion. Who can reflect on the horrid devastations that have been spread thro' the world by mad priests and furious bigots, without being filled with detestation and horror! How preposterous is it to attempt to please the most merciful being in the universe, by cancelling his gentle impressions from our minds, and behaving without mercy! Wherever superstition and enthusiasm have prevailed, they have banished every natural,

natural, every noble sentiment from the human breast. How unaccountable is it that we should even attempt to delight the most wise and intelligent of all beings with little tricks and ceremonies, equally trifling and vain ! How absurd to endeavour to render propitious the most perfect, the most benevolent disposition, by any thing else but acting according to the dignity of our intelligent natures, raising ourselves as near as possible to his perfection, and thus in some measure rendering ourselves worthy of his esteem ! nor less profane is it, added she, to address the mighty father of mankind, who ought to be approached with the most humble awe, and the profoundest veneration, with the amorous language, and the fond endearments that are more justly bestowed upon our own species ; how monstrous is this spiritual kind of debauchery ! nature abhors the impious prophannation, and starts from a worship so impure and sacrilegious. These were the principal subjects of our discourse, in which Miss de Fare and I bore a part with an agreeable satisfaction. Religion stripped of the gloom and unnatural solemnity with which melancholy spirits are apt to clothe it, will ever appear lovely and engaging to a reasonable mind. It owes all its beauty to its own simplicity and native excellence ; and when ever it is made to oppose the indispensable obligations of reason and nature, it must be degraded, and sunk in the opinion of every intelligent and virtuous being. The person who has experienced the exquisite pleasures that attend the practice of the social virtues, and with an humble and upright mind gratefully adores the supreme and unexhausted source of benignity, has satisfactions unknown to the sensualist and epicure, the superstitious and enthusiast. Virtue to such a mind appears always lovely and divinely charming.

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DURING this conversation, I frequently cast my eyes upon the young stranger, and observed that her cheeks glowed with incessant blushes; methought she felt all the charms of virtue, and yet at the same time seemed stunned and confounded. She sometimes looked upon me, with an air of friendship, then sighed, and let fall some tears. As we stepped out of the coach she desired me to walk with her in the garden for a few minutes, to which I gladly consented, and went full of the hopes that she would tell me the cause of her uneasiness, and put it in my power to give her some proof that I sympathized in her afflictions. Dear, Miss, said she, as soon as we were alone, I can't help being desirous of having you for my friend; your tenderness, and generous concern for my uneasiness prepossess me in your favour; and incline me to return you the utmost affection; but I must then disclose all my misery; this you would demand as a proof of my confidence; but alas it would be such a proof of it as would entirely change your kind dispositions to serve me; you would hate, you would detest me; and your displeasure would aggravate my despair, which even now exceeds all bounds. — Indeed, Miss, you injure me very much, returned I; whatever is the cause of your trouble, it will not make me forget what I owe to the distressed: Heaven knows I would do any thing to serve you, and I assure you I will never desire you to tell me any thing that will give you so much pain; only let me know what I can do for you,

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I will ask no questions, but my obedience alone shall prove my friendship. Here she continued silent, and cast down her eyes, while her countenance informed me that her mind was tormented with the most painful agitations. She opened her lips several times as if she would speak, but a rising sigh, prevented her. At last casting a look upon me full of tenderneis grief and shame, I would, said she, lay open my guilt before you, but my tongue refuses to obey me. Alas! I could wish my infamy was hid in eternal oblivion; but that can never be, and if I don't tell you, you will learn it from others. I was educated with the strictest piety; my situation in life was easy and agreeable, and all around conspired to make me happy. But alas! flattered with my little beauty, I forgot myself. I listened to every one that was pleased to address me; and rejoiced in the conquest of a multitude of admirers. But in the height of my vanity an unforeseen accident plunged me into the deepest distress. My father died suddenly, and left his affairs in a very bad situation. I lamented his loss with an unfeigned sorrow; I had no visible means of support: My friends forsook me, and I had only an uncle to depend upon who was gone abroad, and could not give me an immediate assistance: I was even disregarded by those who a few days before professed to have the most violent passion for me: No prospect of relief lay before me: In short I lived upon the little that remained of my father's substance, till that was expended. When I was addressed by a gentleman of fortune, who took advantage of my distress, and basely made use of every expedient to force me to comply with his criminal desires; at last my coward soul, shocked at the appearane of want and misery, consented, and I was ruined:——But who can express the
horror

horrors that flowed in upon me, when cool reflection brought the guilty scene to view? Oh! how sharp are the upbraidings of an offended conscience! what inward perturbations distracted my mind! I was incapable of taking the least repose; no ray of comfort shone into my breast; I reflected on my education, and the pious instructions that my tender mother had inculcated into my mind in my early infancy — but this reflection renewed my anguish. A prostitute, a wretched, a vile prostitute, cried I; am I that guilty wretch? Oh! that I had submitted to the severest hardships! if I had begged my bread, and had been virtuous still, I might then have looked up with a mind conscious of its innocence; and have beheld the face of mankind without a guilty blush. In short, I curst my vanity and folly, that made me rather stoop to be really miserable, and truly contemptible, than to lose the gay, the vain trifles of life. In the midst of these agitations I received a letter from my uncle: he had heard of my father's death, and the unhappy circumstances in which he had left me, and therefore hastened to town with an intention to console me, and supply the place of his deceased brother, by being my guardian, my friend, and kind benefactor: he arrived the night before, just after I had retired to the house of my pretended lover; he knew his character; and foresaw that I was ruined. He wrote to me and upbraided me with the infamy I had brought upon his family, and ordered me never to see him more. I was shocked at the contents of this letter, and abandoned myself for some time to the severest despair. Had I continued virtuous but one hour longer I might now have been happy; I loved my uncle, but I durst not meet his reproaches, and I was ashamed to appear where my

guilt would soon be made public. I therefore resolved to abandon my lover, and seek from my industry an honest support; this resolution was attended with an inward satisfaction. I humbly begg'd the divine forgiveness, and implored the protection of his providence; and after having taken a few rings that were my mother's, and a little money and cloaths I had still left, I abandoned that fatal house, without communicating my intention to any body. Tho' several days are past since I put this design in execution, I have not found any relief; my little money is almost gone, and I have now no other prospect, but of shortly wanting the necessaries of life. Oh! Miss, let not my guilt harden your heart against me, added she; don't be more inexorable than that being who compassionates the penitent, and I hope has heard my prayers.

THIS discourse was delivered in such a soft and plaintive voice, and accompanied with so many tears and sighs, that it seemed to melt my very soul: I forbore to look in her face that I might not encrease her blushes, and would gladly have spared her the confusion of making such a painful discovery, if it had not been necessary for me to know the most material circumstances in order to give her some relief. I stood sometime after she had done, to consider what answer I should make her. She seemed surprized at my making her no reply, and then casting her eyes upon me, and observing my tears, I don't know, Miss, resumed she, what I ought to think of your silence; your virtue makes you perhaps loath and detest me; but you can't do it more than I do myself: however, let me beg that you would not expose me.

No, Miss, returned I, I have not the least disposition to abuse the confidence you have reposed

in me. I am sorry for your uneasiness, and sympathize with you in it: you have indeed had great cause to be afflicted; for guilt and misery are inseparable companions. But your repentance ought to restore you to the esteem of every virtuous mind; this should compose and calm your thoughts, for it is all that heaven requires from frail offending mortals. I won't humble you so far as to give you any thing, you was not born to receive charity; I only desire you would oblige me so far as to let me lend you a few *Lewis d'ors*, which you shall return when it suits your conveniency; I will take your word for them, added I, pulling out my purse, which I put into her hand; pray take what you want, and flatter yourself with the hopes that you will in a few days be restored to your uncle's favour. But in order to that I must know your name, and where to direct to that gentleman. O Miss! cried she, in a transport of joy; how noble, how generous is your behaviour! Good God! this is too much! Here a fresh flood of tears stopp'd her voice; while she gave me a look, which expressed all she would have uttered, in a language infinitely more affecting than any thing she could possibly have said to me.

As I began to think our long absence from the company might be taken notice of, I propos'd our walking in, and desired her again to take freely what money she wanted; for she had not yet been able to open the purse, but stood holding it in her hand without any motion, at last she took two *Lewis d'ors*; I insisted upon her taking five; which I could not prevail upon her to do without some importunity. When returning me the purse without speaking a word, she took hold of my hand and pressed it in a manner so tender and affecting, that I could not help being extremely

moved. Her heart seemed to beat with sensations too violent for utterance, and methought she long'd to press me to her breast, but had not confidence to do it. At last, as we were returning back, My dear friend, cried she, forgive my not being able to express my gratitude. Your goodness quite overwhelms me. — Enough my friend, returned I; you owe me no thanks; virtue is its own reward; my satisfaction in being able to serve you, gives me a pleasure at least equal to yours. I wish I could restore peace and satisfaction to every troubled mind. Depend upon my friendship for the management of your affairs. Here we entered the house, and found Mrs. Dorfin and the officer there; they rose and saluted the young lady and me, and told us they had sent a servant to acquaint me with their arrival; but it was very easy for him to miss us in a garden of such a large extent. We had no sooner sat down, but we were told that dinner was on the table. During which Mrs. de Valville took notice that the young stranger looked upon me with a complacency which she thought very remarkable. An air of serenity was spread over her face, which yet retained some of those marks of joy and admiration which had before agitated her mind. She was pleased with the change, but more so as she imagined I was the cause of it; and congratulated that young lady on the return of her tranquillity. As you have not been pleased, Miss, to acquaint us with the cause of your late melancholy, said she to her; perhaps it may not be agreeable to you to relate it; but as I am persuaded you have let Marianne into the secret, I hope you will permit her to communicate it to us, except you have any particular reason to the contrary. You may depend upon our secrecy if the case requires it; and that we shall use our

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utmost endeavours to serve you, and prove that we deserve your confidence. Miss du Bois, for that was the young stranger's name, coloured at this proposal, and knew not what answer to return her; at last after some hesitation, I am obliged to you, Madam, said she, for the share you take in my concerns, which are of such a nature as to render it absolutely necessary that they should be kept inviolably secret. I have indeed communicated my unhappy story to this young lady, whose goodness has in some measure calmed my mind: I will depend upon her prudence, and leave it to her to do as she shall think fit. But as she seemed to grant me this liberty with some reluctance, we waved the subject; and the discourse turned upon Valville. My son, said my mother, has got a very handsome fortune, and my death will very much encrease it. You all know my affection for Marianne, and therefore can't wonder to find that I have made some provision for her in my will. I have left my son my whole estate, except this house, with its furniture, the gardens round it, and two thousand livres a year, my picture, and some jewels and plate, which I give my daughter. My son cannot have the least reason to complain, since what I leave from him is but a trifle in comparison of my whole estate. Besides he has a very large fortune left him by his father, and my brother. I believe you will approve, Sir, of what I have done, and think that at the same time, that I have considered my affection for my daughter, I have not forgot what I owe to my son. I had indeed given her all, in giving my consent to their marriage; but I know my daughter is not avaritious, and will be very well satisfied with what I have now done for her. The officer and Mrs. Dorlin appeared perfectly pleased with the contents

of her will, and had began to extol her equity and goodness, when I threw myself at her feet. Dear Madam, cried I, I need not tell you how sensible I am of your excessive kindness; you know how dear you are to me, and can easily put your self in my place, and form an idea of the situation of a mind overflowing with every grateful sentiment. Every instance of your affection gives me a very sensible pleasure: how sweet is it to be obliged by those we love! but, dear mamma, how engaging soever this instance of your kindness is, I confess, I can't sincerely approve it. Mr. de Valville has a right to enjoy all you possess after your decease; he has a claim to it founded on reason and nature; he is your son, your only heir, and deserves to possess your estate entire: for I am not ambitious, and since I must be separated from Valville, I don't desire to enjoy any of his fortune except what Mr. de Climal has left me, and your picture, which I shall value more than all the riches in the world. When you are gone you will leave no charms behind for me, nothing to make life desirable.——

Arise, child, said my mother, and don't be silly; I believe you will regret my loss, and be sincerely affected at it; but in time your uneasiness will wear off, and you will become reconciled to it. Valville has enough, and I dare say he will not be displeased at what I have done for you. However, I may live a good while yet; mine is a very lingering distemper. This gentleman and lady, I am sure think I could not do less for thee than I have done: however, as I hope to see my son again, I will tell him my design, and know if he has any objection to it. Will not that satisfy thee? Indeed, Miss, said Mrs. Dorfin, you are too scrupulous, I can't help approving what your mother has done. But pray, added she, is Miss du Bois's misfortune

to be kept a secret? she has left it to your discretion to disclose it to us, if you think proper. She is a very amiable lady; but I could not help thinking that her blushes and confusion expressed a strong sense of guilt and shame: am I right my dear? That, Madam, may perhaps be owing, said the officer, to a delicacy which may make her look upon some circumstances of her misfortune as criminal, which in fact may not be so. No, Sir, said I, that is not the case; I am sorry to say Miss has been highly to blame, and I wish I could give you her story, and hide her guilt; but that could not be done consistent with truth; besides, it would deprive her of the advantage of your assistance. Poor lady! she is much to blame, but yet she deserves your pity and compassion, I shall never be able to describe the horror and anguish of her mind; nor the painful struggle, between her sense of virtue and her shame at having offended its precepts. Here I related ever thing that passed, and concluded with desiring the officer to compassionate her case, and endeavour to make a reconciliation between her and her uncle. I was just going to propose it to you, Miss, returned he; I don't wonder at your being moved at such an affecting story. Happy is the person who having behaved ill, has the resolution to repent; but more happy she who has not need of this repentance.

I OBSERVED that during my discourse, the two ladies listened with the utmost attention; while their countenances expressed the tenderest pity, and the greatest surprize. When I had done they wiped the tears from their eyes, and looked upon each other with an air of astonishment. At last, said Mrs. Dorbin, how dreadful are the agonies

that attend the loss of virtue ! dear bought satisfactions that are accompanied with such exquisite misery, such lasting wretchedness ! if her folly is divulged, she will never be able to wipe off the infamy that will attend her. Rivers of tears and the severest repentance ; no, not a life of the strictest virtue, will, in the opinion of the world, restore her innocence, or retrieve her character. Very true, returned Mrs. de Valville, the world is censorious, and tho' a thousand virtues may be overlooked, yet the indiscretion of an unguarded moment will never be forgotten. We must therefore conceal this unhappy affair. I am very glad, Sir, added she, that you are pleased to undertake the office of reconciling her uncle to her, and we all, I dare say, sincerely wish you success. I thank you, ladies, replied he, I see it will give Miss Marianne a peculiar pleasure ; but I must know where Miss du Bois's uncle lives. Can you inform me, Miss ? Yes, Sir, returned I, and immediately gave him the direction I received from that lady. He had no sooner read it but he smiled ; I know the gentleman, said he, and tho' I am concerned at the trouble this event must have occasioned him, I can't help being pleased to think I shall serve a man of sense and honour, and by restoring him his niece, contribute to his repose. I will wait upon him immediately ; I know he will hear reason ; and tho' his virtue must have made him very sensible of his niece's imprudence, yet the same disposition will prompt him to pardon her upon her repentance.

ON this the officer left us ; but he had not been gone above two hours before we saw him return. As he entered the room, we read in his looks that he had met with success. And after he had told us that our conjectures were true, he sat down, and

at my request gave us a particular account of his adventure. I happened said he, to find Mr. du Bois at home, who received me in a most obliging manner, tho' he appeared to be very uneasy. After the first compliments were over and we had drank part of a bottle, I took notice of his melancholy, and asked him if I could contribute to remove it; he thanked me, and with an affected smile told me, that nothing was the matter with him; then drank my health, and enquired how I liked his wine. I then mentioned his brother, and asked how long he had been dead; he gave me only a slight answer, and almost insensibly turned the discourse on another subject without ever mentioning his niece. By this I imagined that he was tender of her honour, and concluded that however displeased he was with her conduct, he had still some affection for her. I then took the liberty to mention her to him, and to propose a reconciliation; but he seemed surprized, and very much concerned to find that I was acquainted with an affair so little to her credit. No, Sir, said he, I will never let my doors be opened to such a strumpet. As she has ruined herself, she must take the consequence of her folly.——I will forever disown her.——She is a disgrace to her family.——I will never be reconciled to her——and I desire, Sir, you will mention her no more.——This he spoke with a great deal of warmth, and with his looks full of resentment. Then musing a little, poor, unhappy girl, resumed he, in a soft and quite different tone; is her disgrace then made public? What will become of her? Pray, Sir, added he, at whose request do you propose this reconciliation? have you seen her? Yes, Sir, said I, I saw her to-day. And here, Miss, added he,

addressing himself to me, I gave him a particular account, of all that passed between you this morning, at which he was so affected, that I saw I had gained my point before he spoke. Sir, said he, as soon as he found I had done, I think myself greatly obliged to you for this information: I did not think she had been drove to such extremities. As soon as I was informed of my brother's death, and the unhappy disorder in which he left his affairs, I made haste to town, that I might have the satisfaction of providing for his daughter, on whom I intended to bestow my estate, and who I imagined would be a comfort to me in this decline of life. I have always had a very great affection for her, and have loved her as tenderly, as if she was my own child. I therefore went to my brother's house to taste the satisfaction of embracing the dear remains of his family; as well as to relieve her from her anxieties by my care and affection. But how great was my surprize! how inexpressible my grief! to find her seduced and carried off by a villain, who has not the least degree of virtue or honour. A paper which I found on her toilet let me into the whole intrigue. He takes advantage of her distress, promises her a considerable settlement, and makes use of a great deal of art to debauch her principles. I was shocked at his villany and her folly, and the next morning, after I had found she had not been at home the night before, sent her a letter in which I commanded her to see me no more. But I find I was too hasty; her repentance gives her a right to my compassion: I have had a very great concern for her upon my spirits, and have therefore carefully concealed her shame. Poor girl! how nearly is guilt allayed to misery! what remorse and shame, what inward perturbations, what self-

self-abhorrence fill the penitent mind upon the review of a vitious action! such a state deserves our tenderest pity. Tell her therefore, Sir, that I relent, and will gladly receive her to my favour. As soon as he had finished this pathetic discourse, I told him I rejoiced to see him in such a favourable disposition, and would let the lady know how much she was obliged to his tenderness, and immediately took my leave.

WE all expressed a very sensible pleasure at his having so happily concluded this melancholy affair, and returned the officer our thanks on this occasion, in a manner which shewed how nearly we were interested in the lady's happiness. And as I was sensible how necessary this news was to her repose, I immediately resolved to be the welcome messenger of it. In short, I no sooner mentioned my design, but it was approved; the ladies smiled at my impatience, and the officer begged I would give him leave to accompany me, which I readily consented to. In the way I expressed afresh the sense I had of his goodness, and let him know he had very much obliged me. As Miss du Bois lodged not far from our house, we soon found her, and acquainted her with our success, when she burst into tears of joy, embraced me in the most affectionate manner, and thanked the officer in terms which expressed the most lively gratitude. But as it was late, she was obliged to defer waiting on her uncle till the next day. In my return home, I formed a design of being a spectator of the scene between her and Mr. du Bois at their first interview, which I foresaw would be very interesting: Besides, I fancied our company would keep up the spirits of the young lady, who possibly might fear meeting with some reproaches from him: I acquainted Mrs. de Valville

with my thoughts, and she very much approved them; on which the gentleman and Mrs. Dorfin promised to come again in the morning, and bring Mr. du Bois in the coach with them. In fine, the next day I wrote her a note, desiring her to come to dinner with us, and to defer waiting upon her uncle till the afternoon. She came immediately, and was engaged in conversation with Mrs. de Valville and I, when the officer and Mrs. Dorfin entered, and introduced the old gentleman, who had not the least thought of seeing his niece there. She saw him first, started up, trembled, and then suddenly threw herself at his feet. He had begun a compliment to my mamma, but broke off in the middle of a sentence, stood motionless and appeared greatly surprized and disconcerted. However, he recovered first, and raised her up. When she appeared almost ready to faint, hung down her head and had not the courage to look up. He was immediately touched, and endeavoured to inspire her with confidence by the most affectionate endearments; at last she recovered a little, and looking in his face with the tears streaming from her eyes, Oh! Sir, cried she, in the most moving tone, can you indeed forgive me! Yes, child, replied he, weeping too: I ought to forgive thee, and I do it sincerely.——But, alas! I can never forgive myself, she returned, with a countenance expressive of the deepest remorse; to what miseries have I exposed myself! I have dishonoured you, justly forfeited your favour, and rewarded your kindness, by rendering the object of it infamous and detestable; you ought to be ashamed of me; you have reason to despise me, as being a disgrace to your family.——How ill have I requited your tenderness!——No more, my dear, returned he, I cannot bear to hear it. Come, forget what is passed;

passed ; and let it be as if it had never been. —
Oh ! that I could do so ! resumed she, with a sigh ;
but it is impossible ; the idea of my shame will ever
be attended with the most painful anguish ; I shall
never reflect on this part of my life without a keen
sense of guilt. But, Sir, is my infamy made public ?
Am I not already the ridicule of the lowest of
mankind ? am not I reproached and contemned by
the wife and virtuous ? Oh ! that I had died a
thousand deaths rather than thus have stained my
honour, and forfeited all that is most dear and valuable ! —
No, my dear, returned he, the world is yet unacquainted with thy folly ; the vile
wretch who seduced thee, has a design upon a rich
old lady, whom he would marry to support his extravagance ;
his estate is almost all sold, and therefore he is obliged to be secret,
because his success depends upon it. As they began here to be something more calm,
we desired them both to sit down ; we were pleased with the old gentleman's
good sense and tenderness, and desired that we might be honoured with his friendship,
and that he would sometimes do us the favour to give us his and Miss's company.
To which he readily consented.

NOTHING, Madam, could be more moving than this affecting scene :
Miss du Bois's looks expressed throughout a mixture of shame and confusion,
and her words and actions the deepest repentance ; on his side, was all softness,
a paternal affection, and a generous concern for her happiness. We could none of us refrain from weeping ;
and I observed that even the officer's manly countenance was bathed in tears.

WHAT a wide extreme is there between the virtuous and the vicious !
the first has the sublimest satisfactions ; the pleasures of a God. The enjoy-
ments

ments of the last, are low, transient, and pall upon the senses ; they depend upon our extinguishing the very sense of our reasonable nature, and therefore are only the mean gratifications of a brute. The delights of the one are accompanied with inward complacency and self-applause ; they brighten upon the review ; whilst every reflection is a repetition of the pleasure : but the other is attended with inward perturbations, self-abhorrence, and shame ; they will not bear a sober and cool review ; but the very idea of them is a real misery. What a degradation of the noble powers of reason and reflection ! what a vast stoop to chuse rather to be a brute, than a wise, a happy and intelligent being ! But to proceed with my story :

MR. du Bois and his niece gave us their repeated thanks for our making so happy a reconciliation. Soon after dinner was over, they were going to leave us ; but at our request they stay'd the rest of the day, and at night we parted, with reciprocal expressions of friendship.

I WENT to bed with my mind filled with a variety of agreeable sensations, and slept till late the next morning ; when I arose and went to my mother's room ; but found her more disorder'd than ever : she had been constantly attended by a physician for some time ; but now he could not give us any hopes that she would ever recover. Several days passed over in which nothing material happened to me ; I hardly ever left my mother, who grew worse. Mrs. Dorlin came almost every day to see her, and to comfort me ; for my tenderness seem'd to encrease in proportion as her life grew more in danger. I frequently sat up with her all night, notwithstanding her fears that it would prejudice my health ; and at last I could hardly bear to be separated from her a moment. Yet in spite

of

of all my uneasiness, I could not help thinking sometimes of Valville ; I found I still loved him, and my heart induced me to excuse him to myself ; and made me even almost wish to see him again. Mean while I found the fatigue I daily underwent was a great deal too much for me ; and that, together with the thoughts of losing my mother, had deprived me of the little strength I had recovered since my late illness. I grew pale and weak, my watching and tears had in a great measure extinguished the fire of my eyes ; and my vivacity and natural gaiety gave place to a thoughtful sadness. However, I put a constraint upon myself, and endeavoured to appear as chearful as possible before my mother ; but I could not dissemble so well as to deceive her : She frequently told me that my excessive care and assiduity, tho' it was an undeniable proof of my affection, gave her real pain. But for some time I was unwilling to abate my diligence : I made light of her observation, and told her I only did my duty ; and entreated that she would not deny me the satisfaction of attending upon her, since I ardently desired to do it. But at last my own weakness, rather than that tender lady's advice obliged me to desist ; for I was brought almost as low as herself. However, I spent all my time with her and Mrs. Dorfin, whose affection for this dear lady sooth'd my grief. She sympathized with me, and in the kindest manner endeavoured to moderate my sorrow ; her solid and judicious discourse, never appeared more charming than now ; and I began to be resigned to providence and to enjoy a good degree of calmness and serenity ; when an unexpected event gave a happy turn to my affairs.

ONE day, as I was sitting with my mother, and had been saying some of those tender things
which

which naturally drop from a heart full of the sincerest friendship, I heard some body come softly up stairs; the door opened; but how vast was my surprize when I saw Valville enter. Tho' I had for some days before even wished to see him, I now found I was unable to support the shock of such a sudden, such an unexpected pleasure. I held my mother's hand in mine, but my nerves seemed to slacken, I let go my hold, and fell senseless upon the floor.

WHETHER my fainting was owing to my present weakness, which made me unable to bear such a sudden surprize, and support the strange tumult in my soul; or whether it proceeded from the softness of my mind, which had just been melted by my mother's tender endearments, I know not; however, when I recovered, which was not till some time, I found myself in bed in my own room, violently sick and faint; and perceived that in my fall I had received a large contusion in my head, which had been already dressed by a surgeon: he was seated with Mrs. de Valville, who was weeping by my bed-side: and they were surrounded by several maid servants.

WHEN I opened my eyes, I looked about me, and, greatly surprized at my condition, ask'd my mamma with a weak and low voice, where I was, and what had reduced me to that condition; for I had entirely forgot the circumstance of my fainting, and had only a very confused idea of having seen Valville. She satisfied me by answering my request, and at the same time desired me to be silent. As I found myself hardly able to speak, I complied with her desire, and remained the rest of the day, and the following night, in a state little different from that from which I had just been recovered. The next day I found myself something better, tho'

tho' I had a violent pain in my head ; and three or four days after, I was able to sit up in my bed. My mother did not think it was yet proper to communicate the news she had to tell me ; but a few days after this, when she thought me able to support the emotions her discourse would infallibly occasion in me, she drew near to my bed-side, and taking hold of my hand, My dear, said she, with an air of the utmost tenderness, I have surprizing news to tell you ; news which I hope will hasten your recovery. I don't know whether you took notice of Valville's looks, when he came into my room ; I did ; he enter'd with an air of submissive respect, and cast a look at you full of all that tenderness, which used to inform his breast, when he adored you with the utmost passionate fondness ; but no words can describe his confusion, when he saw you fall upon the floor. He ran and snatch'd you up in his arms, with a look of the utmost distraction ; your face was immediately stained with blood, which ran upon his cloaths. The servants immediately came running up, and took you from him, when he took horse, and rode full speed to Paris for a surgeon : he came back and brought him with him, before you came to yourself. His soul seemed to be tormented with the most violent and frightful agitations ; and his grief and despair appeared in all his actions : when fearing that his presence would be of ill consequence, if he should stay till you came to yourself, I intreated him to retire, which your interest made him submit to, tho' he could not do it without the appearance of the greatest reluctance ; but however he went no farther than into the antichamber, where he staid at the door, to enquire how you did of every one that went out. At last I told him, that you had recovered your senses, and was found to be out of

of danger : he lifted up his eyes, and drying away his tears, O heavens ! cried he, in an extacy, does she live ? shall I then be so happy as to persuade her to believe, that her virtue and generosity have overcome me, and that I now love her more than ever !

Is it possible ? cried I interrupting her, is it possible ? what a wavering and inconstant disposition ! what a contradiction he is to himself ! he must be a stranger to love, that can so lightly change the object of it. A slight hurt made him enamoured with me ; an ordinary fainting fit induced him to change his resolution, forsake me, and almost adore another ; for he makes it appear, that this was his only reason ; since the same incident attended with a few frightful circumstances, reclaims him, makes him break his former engagements, and regret his abandoning me. A very hopeful lover truly ! the next lady who has a greater misfortune before him, will melt his heart, impress her image there, and infallibly make him her admirer, till another still more unhappy, shall gain the preference. Poor Valville ! how art thou the sport of every irregular impulse ? how strangely carried away by every capricious fancy ?

NOTWITHSTANDING this exclamation, I can't positively affirm, that this news gave me either pleasure or pain, tho' I can't help thinking, that I had some secret satisfaction upon it ; but it lay hid in some corner of my heart, and might then escape my notice.

PRAY, child, don't judge too rashly, replied my mother, finding I had done ; he may not appear so weak, upon a further examination ; come, hear what he had to say for himself, and refer your censures till then. As this exclamation, added she, seemed rather to be dictated by a sudden transport

transport of joy than directed to me, I was going to leave him, when he cast himself at my feet; My dear mother, cried he, I did not hear of your illness till yesterday, if I had, nothing should have prevented my waiting upon you; indeed I am sincerely afflicted to see you so much altered, I arrived at Paris yesterday about noon, and immediately set out with a design to visit the marchioness of Kilmair, I went with all the impatience of a lover, who had been for a long time detained from his Mistress, in order to engage her to invite Miss Varthon to dinner, that I might have her company there as usual; but in my way I was constrained by a friend to step into his house, upon his promising not to detain me. I there found Miss de Fare. I confess I could not see her without a confusion, which perhaps was too visible, as she had been a witness to some of those tender things, I had some time ago said at her mother's to Miss Marianne; however I sent my request to the Marchioness in a letter, and told her I should wait upon her in an hour's time. Miss de Fare took an opportunity to inform me of your illness, and even mentioned the many obligations, which Mrs. Dorfin had told her I had to Marianne, particularly her prevailing upon you to pardon my inconstancy, and even consent to my marrying her rival, as well as her generosity in desiring you not to give her what you had promised in your will. She repeated as near as she was able, the very words that passed between you, I confess that at her first mentioning Marianne's name, I was filled with the greatest uneasiness, and would have been very glad of an excuse to have left the room. However I could find none; but when she mentioned the letter you received from Versailles, I thought myself so interested, that I could not help listening

listening to her with the greatest attention ; for I had spent part of the time you had been sending after me, with Miss Varthon at Paris, and had therefore formed a plausible story to deceive you, in which you would at once have detected me. Here I was in spite of my self both surprized and charmed, and my admiration continued to arise, as she proceeded, to such a degree, that the tears came into my eyes, and I could not help sighing, and feeling a tender pity for that dear generous girl. At last I left her, and thanked her for her information in such a manner, that I am sure she must have taken notice, that what she had said had very much affected me. However I could not dispense with attending on Miss Varthon ; but I went with much slower steps than I was going with two hours before, tho' I had staid an hour longer than I promised in my letter. I found Miss Varthon there before me, but did not meet her with that rapture, which in the morning I had imagined would attend such a long expected interview. No, my mind was frequently absent, and led me to contemplate what I had just heard ; and I that was in an extasy for some days before, at this moment was obliged to dissemble lest she should perceive my coldness. After dinner, she happened amongst other things to ask what Marianne had said to me, when she conducted me to the arbour ; I gave her a particular account of it, but it was not without great difficulty that I disguised the emotions it caused in my breast. When I had done, she commended her generosity, but it was with a very cool and indolent air : she then mentioned a letter she had sent to Marianne, to express her gratitude for concealing her share in my intrigue, and her promise afterwards to see me no more. The old lady and her daughter were equally credulous,

dulous, cried she, smiling, I only meant that I would not see you at the convent; you may see me here as often as you please, if they don't know it. I love you too well, to part with you for such a one as she, who you know would be a mortal disgrace to you, added she, laying her hand upon mine, and smiling in my face. How Miss, cried I, was this expression of your gratitude to deceive them? indeed it was poorly done! Marianne's generous sentiments deserved at least, that you should treat her with sincerity, in return for her regard to you. As this, Madam, was spoke with a serious air, she could not help shewing her resentment. I don't know what you mean, Sir, returned she, snatching away her hand with an air of indignation; I confess you treat me very odd y; what is poorly done? if I have deceived your mother and that girl, have you any reason to complain of insincerity. I confess, I was quite confounded at this reproach, which was too just not to make a very deep impression upon me; however, I could not bear to hear you both treated with such contempt, and therefore endeavoured to make her believe, that she greatly injured you, by mentioning several instances of Marianne's generosity; here her jealousy and pride took the alarm, and her mind which was all tenderness before, became instantly full of rage, and she assumed such airs, as made me blush for my weakness in loving her. She told me, she was sorry she had degraded her self so much, as to listen to my addresses; that she was not of a rank that would suffer her conduct to be compared with the character of an orphan, that was probably of a low ignoble birth, and that she looked upon my treating her thus, as the highest affront. These reproaches had no other effect, but to make the amiable Marianne appear still more lovely;

lovely; what a surprizing contrast! said I to myself; how ungrateful have I been to forsake that dear girl, whose tenderness makes her prefer my interest to her own, and who only consults my felicity! This reflection made me give her a very cool answer, which was not at all to her satisfaction. She cast a look at me full of resentment, telling me I presumed too much upon her tenderness, which she said, she had been fool enough to confess to me; but since she found I did not deserve it, I should no longer impose upon her, and therefore order'd me in an imperious tone, to see her no more. And then flounced out of the room, flinging the door after her. But one thing was very particular, I observed that by her manner of leaving me, she thought I would call her back, and I was convinced she really expected it, by her stopping at the outside of the door for a minute, to give me an opportunity of doing so; but when she found I kept my seat, and continued silent, I heard her retire.

I WAS so far from being concern'd at her ill treatment, that I was really glad I had given her an opportunity to shew her temper; and therefore only staid to take my leave of the Marchioness, which I did as soon as she enter'd the room, which was but a moment after; and retired full of the charms of that dear lady, who had first taken possession of my heart. As I went home, I ran over in my mind every thing that Miss de Fare had told me, and found it so conformable to the sweetness of Marianne's disposition, that I could not doubt the truth of the least particular. I hated myself for my ingratitude, and reproached myself every minute, for the uneasiness I had given that enchanting creature. How noble and disinterested, said I, is her behaviour, and how could I have the stupidity

stupidity to forsake her, for a lady whose soul is widely different from hers? Oh am I still dear to her? and may I flatter myself with possessing that amiable girl? I am resolved to ask her forgiveness, and endeavour to regain her favour.

I HEARD that a man of quality had made his addresses to her; this news filled me with uneasiness, and made me reproach my self in the severest manner; it was like a dagger to my heart; I have deserved to lose her, said I, I have deserved to be wretched; I cursed those false friends, who had filled me with mistaken notions of honour, and had made me ashamed of what was necessary to my happiness; ashamed of what ought to have been my glory; and this news seemed to increase my passion, by the difficulty there appeared of ever obtaining my desires. Some affairs, Madam, prevented my coming last night, but all my thoughts were here; I long'd to cast myself at her feet and yours, and endeavour to obtain forgiveness from both; I longed to testify the sense I have of her goodness, and to find if I was still dear to that charming creature. I enter'd your room, with my mind full of a tender admiration, and yet full of diffidence, and a dread of offending; but I no sooner saw her, than my heart seem'd ready to leap from my bosom; but no words can describe the confusion, the fright, the agony of my soul, when I saw the effects of my presence.

OH mamma, cried I, does he then love me again? may I indulge once more the thought of being really your daughter? delightful idea! shall my miseries be succeeded by such exquisite happiness? no, you will soon be snatched from me; I shall soon be deprived of the dearest part of me: but tell me, mamma, does not the same objection hold

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hold good against our union; may he not fear being treated with contempt by his friends? may he not fear their reproaches still? and will not their censures damp our dearest joys, and cool his transports? will he not blush for entering into engagements, which will load him with contumely? alas! I fear he will. No, I hope not, my dear, returned she. You are dearer to him than ever; he is now drawn to you, constrained by reason, and gratitude; by an esteem, that will compel him to love; an esteem that time will encrease; for the more he knows you, the greater will be the ascendant you will have over his heart. The officer's preferring you to every other of our sex, will make him proof against the affronts, that may be thrown upon him; and he will be ashamed to appear less hardy than him: he will think if that gentleman, whose wisdom and good sense is too well known to be called in question, scorns the censure of the ill-judging multitude; he must have an equal reason for doing so too. As for me, I shall not be long here a witness of your happiness, but it will be a great pleasure to me to see you united before I die: and whilst I live I shall give you both my prayers, for a continuance of your mutual felicity. Dear mamma, cried I, I sincerely thank you; but the thoughts of losing you, must damp every joy; I can give up my heart to no delight, whilst I see you on the verge of life. How could you think that I should consent to marry him, when a moment after I must part from you. Pray don't suffer the first days of our nuptials to be dash'd with grief. Valville's tenderness, if he loves me dearly, will sooth my anguish for your loss; we shall mingle our tears, and find a sweet sympathy in the most bitter sorrow. Well, my dear, returned that engaging lady, I will not

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press you too much ; I will be satisfied if you resolve to conclude it after my decease ; I know your tenderness will induce you to pay a decent respect to my memory, but do not carry it too far ; your affliction will be of no service to me ; let the prospect of your approaching happiness dry up your tears. But my son waits to see you, added she smiling, and I think I may desire him to come in, since a reconciliation between you is so far advanced.

UPON this she went out, and presently returned with Valville, who entered with some confusion, and threw himself on his knee at my bedside. Miss, said he, with a timorous voice, you can't wonder if I don't know how to approach you without trembling. I am ashamed of my own inconstancy ; an inconstancy which your beauty and goodness render altogether inexcusable ; I won't pretend to offer any apologies as an alleviation of my guilt ; no, my behaviour will admit of none ; they would only render me more detestable : I confess myself, dear Miss, unworthy of that regard you have always shewn me ; absolutely unworthy of having the least pretensions to your friendship. But since your amiable conduct has opened my eyes, let me tell you how much I owe you ; let me express my gratitude, and thank you in the sincerest terms, for that tender regard you have shewn to me ; for that concern you have always expressed for my happiness, even whilst I was acting inconsistently with my honour, and those engagements which ought to have made me inviolably yours ; a noble return for falsehood and deceit ! a glorious instance of that rectitude of heart, which is proof against every passion that is an enemy to virtue ! you now see me full of remorse ; full of the deepest confusion for having offended

you: and if you have any degree of resentment lurking in that pure heart, you have now an opportunity of satisfying it, by beholding a mind distracted with its own folly without a pitying eye. But you have a soul too great to harbour revenge. Then what is mine that has offended against such consummate virtue! Oh! that I could atone for the uneasiness I have given you, or make you forget my infidelity! I deserve your hatred; and merit only to be treated with contempt and scorn. I feel the most ardent passion, without daring to hope that you will ever consent to make me happy. Even my return to you and Love has been attended with circumstances the most shocking and dreadful; my presence, like that of a hateful monster, has produced the most terrible effects; and has even almost cost you your life, at a time when it was dearer to me than ever; what anguish has your illness occasioned me! with what cruel torments has it filled my distracted mind.——Here Mrs. de Valville interrupted him. You have no reason, said she, to make such cruel invectives against yourself, Marianne has never ceased to love you; and I dare say she will readily pardon your fault, since you yourself are so very sensible of it.

I CONFESS I could not see Valville at my feet, and hear him say such tender things without being touched, and melting into a softness which made me unable to interrupt him; I heard him with an inward satisfaction, and felt while he spoke the most delicious sensations. However, I thought I ought not to let him too soon into the disposition of my heart. I don't know, Sir, replied I, finding Mrs. de Valville and he were both silent; I don't know what return I ought to make to your professions of love; I confess you are still very dear to me; but how must I know that your heart is sincere?

sincere what reason have you to think that marrying me will be less dangerous to your repose than you have before thought it? Will not our union be attended with misery to us both? Will you not be ashamed of a marriage that must degrade you in the opinion of the world? Will not their scorn make you hate me, as being accessory to your ruin? This is an evil I ought to fear; and the very idea of rendering you unhappy, is enough to make me shut my self up in a convent for life. Oh! Sir, consider what you are doing; consider whether you have any solid reasons to change those sentiments, which have made you resolve to abandon me; is there not the same reason you should do so now as ever? Besides, Sir, can a slight quarrel justify your forsaking Miss Varthon? How do I know but your return may proceed rather from your resentment to her, than from any new motives of love to me? I assure you, I am too tender of your honour and happiness to contribute to your doing any thing inconsistent with either.——Ah! Miss, cried he, in the most moving tone, at the same time taking my hand and pressing it between his; pray don't sink me deeper in despair. I have been deluded by false notions of honour and interest; and in pursuit of a shadow have acted contrary to both; contrary to true honour and my most perfect interest: I have been persuaded to abandon you, and foolishly consented to do it, even while you were very dear to my heart; I have met with some success. I have endeavoured to divert my passion by changing the object; but your generosity in offering me your assistance, disconcerted my schemes, and made me unable to think of your rival without making a comparison which was greatly to your advantage; but I have endeavoured to stifle the impression it made upon my

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mind,

mind, till I heard the surprizing effects of your goodness in my absence: That recalled all my tenderneſs, and revived every ſoft impreſſion. I could not bear to hear Miſs Varthon treat you with contempt, every diſreſpectful word was like a dagger to my ſoul; I was ſhocked at her ingratitude and hypocrify, and aſtoniſhed to find ſhe was able to impoſe upon you under a ſhew of friendſhip; I deteſted her ungenerous baſeneſs; I was ſenſible of my folly, and bluſhed to ſee how I had been deluded by my pretended friends, and reſolved to throw myſelf upon your mercy. The ſuppoſed miſfortunes that would attend our union, are vain and ſilly chimeras; your virtue and integrity, your piety and good ſenſe, would make the loweſt ſtate of life, preferable to the higheſt with any other woman; and might I be ſo happy as to poſſeſs your tendereſt affectionſ, I would look with contempt even upon a crown; and not all the riches in the univerſe, ſhould ſhake my reſolution of being eternally yours.

I COULD not forbear giving a ſigh at theſe tender expreſſions, but it was a ſigh unmixed with the leaſt tincture of uneaſineſs, except what was occaſioned by my putting a conſtraint upon myſelf to conceal my ſatiſfaction; and only proceeded from the ſtreams of delight which poured in upon my mind. Mrs. de Valville eaſily perceived the ſituation of my heart; My dear, ſaid ſhe, with her eyes full of the moſt melting joy, Valville muſt be for ever yours, ſince he has learned to do juſtice to your merit: come, give me your hand. I held it out to her immediately, ſhe preſſed it between her's, and then ſuddenly taking hold of Valville's, put my hand into his; my children, ſaid ſhe, may you be mutually happy; may this union

union be crowned with lasting felicity, and the most durable delights; delights uninterrupted by anxious care, and every painful inquietude. My son possess the virtuous Marianne, added she, giving him a tender look, imitate her goodness, her fidelity, and learn to set a just value upon those perfections, which will render your felicity solid and permanent. Her study will be to make you happy, may yours be to render her so. —

My dear mother's heart seemed here too full to permit her to say any more, some tears gushed from her eyes, and trickled down her cheeks, and she pressed our hands together; for she still held Valville's and mine between hers. Then recovering herself, she resumed: My dear children, I shall now leave you with comfort, since I can wish you no greater happiness in this life, than what I see you in the prospect of. You will be both settled in such a manner, as to render your situation very agreeable; you have virtue and love to sweeten life, and a great estate which will not only procure you all the conveniences of it, but give you the power of tasting the exalted pleasure of doing good. You may make the gloom vanish from the troubled brow, the orphan and the widow sing for joy, and the afflicted and disconsolate exult in transports of delight: and may you, my dear daughter, added she looking upon me in a manner prodigiously affecting, have many pledges of your mutual love! may they all share thy virtues, and transmit them down to posterity. O may heaven smile upon your joys, and pour down its blessings upon you!

THESE expressions were too affecting to render it possible, for either of us to make an immedi-

ate reply. We appeared equally moved, the tears streamed from our eyes for some time; we were melted down, and almost seemed as if we had been filled with some severe affliction. At last Valville began, dear Madam, dear Miss, cried he, with a sudden joy breaking thro' his tears; what shall I say to express the sentiments of my heart? how shall I describe the pleasing painful tumult that fills my soul? I am borne down with the weight of my own happiness; my transports are too violent to be endured!——Does this dear, this charming creature love me still! have you forgot my ingratitude? my barbarous, my vile ingratitude?——Pray, Sir, mention it no more, interrupted I, I have nothing to reproach you with. I am still the same, and I don't blush to tell you, that you have been always dear to me, infinitely dearer than life itself! no other person would ever be able to make an impression upon my heart, which has never ceased to be yours. The tender emotions of my soul had here exhausted my spirits, and it was with great difficulty I pronounced these last words loud enough to be heard; I was still too weak, to endure such violent agitations; and found my self ready to sink under the tender ideas which filled my mind. My mamma had let go our hands, and walked to the window to dry away her tears; but I still suffered Valville to hold mine without endeavouring to draw it from him; he pressed it to his breast, and then to his lips, without seeming to know what he did. My mother soon returned, and told her son, that it was time to leave me to recover my self; and that I ought to take a little rest; she then embraced us both in the most affectionate manner, and desiring Valville to attend her, constrained him to depart.

WHAT surprizing vicissitudes attend human life! how swift is the transition from grief to joy! and how nearly do these opposite sensations bear a resemblance! for when pleasure grows excessive it becomes nearly allyed to pain. As all happiness subsists in the soul, the mind must be in a disposition fit to attend to it, and by reflection to carry it as near to perfection as possible. In order to this we must enjoy a great degree of tranquility; for what ever disturbs us, destroys that self-enjoyment which is the basis of all human felicity. Excessive transports of joy, or a too sudden transition from the extremes of grief, to those of the contrary passion, are too violent to be of any long continuance; they are like a sudden blaze, which scorches and fills the body with pain; while a moderate heat would refresh and enliven it. I don't know, Madam, whether you are of the same opinion or no; but if you are not, it can only proceed from want of reflecting upon the nature of your mind, and observing the effects of its emotions; for in this respect, all minds I am persuaded are the same, and in every breast a placid serenity and inward composure, and the delightful sensations which proceed from those ideas which charm the soul and all its passions into a pleasing harmony, is the highest pitch of human felicity.

I soon found, that these violent agitations had considerably weakened me; and was so disordered, that had not a servant entered almost as soon as my mother left me, and given me a few drops in a little wine, I should infallibly have fainted away. My dear Valville and his mother were present before me all the rest of the day, and the following night; and my imagination repeated over and over every

tender endearment ; methought I still saw his confusion ; attended to the melting sounds of love, and heard them both repeat, with the utmost affection, every endearing expression. But about break of day, I dropped asleep, and did not awake till noon, when I found myself a little refreshed. I now began to regard Valville, as if he had already been my husband, and looked upon my mamma's joining our hands in that tender manner, as a kind of marriage. He saw me every day, my mind became insensibly more calm, and in a short time I was pretty well recovered. But alas ! Mrs. de Valville grew daily worse, and was soon obliged to keep her bed ; Mrs. Dorbin, and Miss de Fare came frequently to see her, and congratulated me on our happiness, at the same time that they endeavoured to enable me to support the loss of my dear mother. I was under too many engagements to these ladies, for the share they had in our reconciliation, not to make them a suitable return. I had the satisfaction too sometimes to see the officer ; who notwithstanding his own passion, expressed a generous pleasure at our union, and let me know that he prized my felicity above his own ; or rather, that my happiness made the greatest part of his : but alas ! my dear dear mother's condition damped all my joy ; a separation from her was a severe stroke that required all my resolution and fortitude to enable me to bear. Since Valville's post was sold to another, he was under no obligation to leave us, we therefore spent great part of our time together in my mother's room, and endeavoured mutually to comfort each other ; we mingled our tears, and had a soft and pleasing sympathy in our affliction.

ONE day as we were seated near the bed-side, she ordered the servants to leave the room, and then

then desiring us to come near, My dear children, said she, in a slow and weak voice, I shall soon bid you a long adieu; but you must not lament my loss with an immoderate grief; I know I have been a tender mother to you, and therefore believe you will not be able to part with me without pain. I am leaving a world surrounded with many and various uneasinesses, to which the frail state of human nature is always liable; but I shall soon arrive in the world of happy beings; a world where peace and eternal joy reign without interruption; don't let your tears seem to say you envy my happiness; don't wish me deprived of the noblest felicity, for no other reason but to indulge your fondness to me here. That would be unkind and cruel.——Here she paused; then recovering her self, May you live, and be a blessing to the world, resumed she; and, O my son, steadily adhere to the practice of virtue; dare to oppose your self to the licentious customs of a degenerate age; and by your example endeavour to stem the torrent of vice. Don't blush to own your obligations to that great being, who fills the universe with the wonderful exertions of his wisdom and power; give him your highest esteem, your highest reverence and supreme regard. Let your devotion to him spring from gratitude, and never mention his name without a respectful and humble awe; regard his favour as the highest blessing, and endeavour to imitate his moral character, and to follow the bright example, which the blessed author of our religion has set before us.——Then taking breath a little, Believe me, my son, continued she, a mind conscious of its own innocence and integrity, enjoys a most refined and rational delight; it bears with a serene composure the various un-

avoidable misfortunes of life ; looks into a future state with pleasure, and even could smile amidst the pangs of expiring nature.

THESE last words were spoke so very low, that we could scarce hear them ; she seemed quite spent, and after pulling us both to her, to embrace us, she repeated her wishes that we might be mutually happy, and then endeavoured to take some rest. We were greatly moved at this discourse, and went into another room to indulge our grief : Valville eagerly kissed the falling tears from my cheeks, and then laid his face to mine, while our souls seemed to mingle like those dewy drops ; our griefs, our cares, our pains the same.

BUT, Madam, I must break off. The remembrance of this tender scene, has I am afraid rendered these last paragraphs almost unintelligible ; I can't think of this dear lady's death, without melting into a flood of tears, and to them you must ascribe all those blots which have stained my paper. How difficult, Madam, is it to support ourselves under such severe afflictions ! afflictions which require the greatest efforts of reason and philosophy, to enable us to behave under them, with any degree of constancy and resolution ! when the mind is oppress'd with the frightful apprehensions of losing some beloved object, it is in vain to hope for succour from those ideas which interfere with the tender sensations of the heart, since all its impulses are blind, and spring only from its passions ; the soul infallibly turns it self to the objects of the mind ; while the cool dictates of reason have not the power of affecting it.

VALVILLE and I were quite inconsolable, at the apprehensions of suddenly losing my dear mother. Her tender discourses, and moral exhortations

tations set her death before our eyes, in the most painful light; and instead of giving us that comfort she desired, only made us more sensible of the greatness of our loss, and more unable to bear up under it. My grief seemed to encrease as she drew nearer her end; and Valville, who feared the effects of it, employed all his endeavours to give me that comfort which he wanted himself. She began now to be too weak to give us any more advice; and could only express her tenderness by kissing me, squeezing my hand, and then lifting up a dying look to heaven, as if she was praying for our happiness. One morning, I was waked out of my sleep by a noise and bustle among the servants; I no sooner opened my eyes, but I cried out, Alas! she is dead, and then fainted away. My conjecture was but too true; for I no sooner came to myself, than finding every thing quiet, I rang the bell for a servant; one of them immediately came into my room, with her eyes swelled with crying. I needed no more to satisfy me, that my fears were too well grounded. However I asked her if my mamma was not dead? Don't fright yourself, Miss, said she, turning away her head; she is much better, than she was last night, and then she retired. This was spoke with a trembling voice; she was too much affected, to keep the sad news from me, for all the servants lamented her, as having lost a sincere friend, whom they tenderly loved. But how unaccountable are the sensations of our minds! tho' I had been hitherto deaf to every reflection, that did not tend to encrease my grief, I no sooner heard that she was really dead, but I felt myself inspired with more courage than I ever expected, and perceived myself in a more calm and resigned disposition. Then

she is happy, cried I, she now reaps the fruits of her virtue and piety! blessed spirit! when shall we meet again to part no more! — when shall I lay down this feeble frame, and share with you in the sublimer joys of immortal beings! when taste your pleasures, and share in your pure delights! O my God, may this prospect fire my ambition, and make me endeavour to imitate her virtues, that I may enjoy her transports! I was thus raising myself above my afflictions, by these motives of consolation, when Valville entered my room, with a countenance perfectly disordered, he had been up some time, and had heard me ring, and therefore came to share with me in my grief, that we might ease our hearts, by giving loose to the tender emotions of nature. He saw at once that I had been acquainted with the melancholy news; when taking hold of my hand, My dear Marianne, said he, what a dreadful loss is this! may heaven enable thee to support it. Dreadful indeed! returned I, but yet since it cannot be recovered, let us endeavour to behave consistent with our hopes as Christians. May we ever do so, my dear, replied Valville; and since she is happy, let us not think that we are miserable. We thus endeavoured for some time to console each other, till it was time for me to arise; when he left me.

In the afternoon Mrs. Dorfin and Miss de Fare came to see me, in order to sooth my grief, by sharing it with me; Valville unknown to me, had sent a servant to acquaint them with our affliction, and to desire their company. And this day was spent in a manner suitable to the solemn occasion. Methought there was something extremely engaging in this soft and tender sympathy of souls,
where

where every one wept as if they had lost a mother. Every thing about us had the face of grief, and for some time, not the meanest domestic appeared with dry eyes. At last, the source of our tears was dried up, and the virtues of the dear deceased lady became the subject of our conversation; when Mrs. Dorfin mentioned a hundred instances that evidenced the greatness of her soul, and proved the vast extent of her generosity and compassion, most of which I had hitherto been unacquainted with. When she had done, what a glorious example has she left us to excite our emulation, said Valville, taking hold of my hand, with an air the most tender and affecting! may it be our care, my dear, to follow her steps, and may we always express the same sweetness and benevolence to those who deserve our assistance. Alas! Sir, replied I, I fear I shall fall very far short of her in these amiable perfections; tho' I shall strive to come as near them as possible.

IN the evening, these two charming ladies, after using their endeavours to reconcile us to our loss, prepared to leave us; O Madam, said I to Mrs. Dorfin, I can't help being very sensible of this severe affliction, methinks I feel a vacancy in my breast; that dear lovely woman has bid us a long adieu; and I have no sooner tasted the sweetness of having a mother, than she is torn from me: at this, Mrs. Dorfin clasped me in her arms; my dear, said she, think that I am your mother, indeed I have an affection for you which exceeds all bounds; you shall be my daughter, ——— my friend, and all that is most dear to me; she then embraced me; when Miss de Fare took this opportunity,

to

o give me the most tender assurances of her affection.

BUT as I am weary of writing, and willing to divert my thoughts a little from this gloomy subject, I shall leave, Madam, the continuation of my story to the tenth part.

The End of the NINTH PART.

THE

THE VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART X.

I HOPE, Madam, you are now a little better satisfied with my unfaithful lover, and begin to think him not quite such a monster as you falsely imagined him to be.

If you assert still that he has his faults, it is only saying he is a man; for imperfection and human nature have a necessary connection; and they only are wise, who when they are sensible of an error, know how to set about a reformation immediately. But tho' he was to blame in this instance, yet he has a number of virtues that render his character perfectly amiable; and I assure you this instance of ill conduct has been of the highest service to him, and has perhaps rendered us more durably happy, than we should have been had he never offended.

As soon as my mother's funeral was over, I thought it advisable to shut my self up in my convent for some time; this I was prompted to by the melancholy disposition of my mind, which made me in love with a retirement where I might indulge my reflections without interruption; besides I considered that it would not now be decent,

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to live any longer in the house with Valville, till after our marriage. But as this resolution opposed his desire of spending his time with me, he applied to Mrs. Dorfin, who proposed my living with her, and used so many arguments to persuade me to it, that I could not absolutely refuse her; and therefore promised to stay in the convent only a month, where I might receive her visits, and have the satisfaction of seeing Valville in her company, as often as she pleased. In fine, Mrs. Dorfin carried me to the convent, when after paying my respects to the abbess, and letting her know, that providence had deprived me of my dear mother, I went to my friend the nun's apartment, who rejoiced to see me; she desired me to sit down, said a great many things to comfort me for my loss, and I then told her in a few words what had passed during my absence, only omitting my adventure with Miss du Bois, which I was resolved to keep secret.

WHEN I had done, she told me, she would defer congratulating me on my reconciliation with my lover, till I was in a situation of mind, that would render such discourses more agreeable to me. She then said that Miss Varthon had received orders from her mother, to follow her to England, and that she had left the convent the day before. As I had now nothing to fear from Valville's inconstancy, this piece of news was on his account, neither able to give me pleasure or pain; but yet the reflection, that I should not be obliged to mortify her by my presence, was a satisfaction that suited with my delicacy; for I easily conceived that after what had passed, it would be impossible for her to see me without a confusion, that I had not the least inclination to give her.

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WHEN I retired to my room, I ran over in my mind all the tender scenes which had passed between my dear mother and me; and enumerated the repeated instances of her goodness; whilst my soul successively felt the various sensations, that at different times had possessed it. I then turned my thoughts upon my self; but how different appeared the scene! how widely different my character from hers! what an extravagant ridiculous vanity! what a complication of pride and folly! oh how unlike her simplicity; said I to myself. How ridiculous is it for a reasonable being, to indulge a fondness for dress and splendour! what an insipid gratification is this, to a mind that is capable of the sublimest joys! O my dear mother, may I entirely conquer this constitutional folly! may I form myself by your example, and disdain like you, to stoop so low as to indulge the trifling foibles of my sex. My dear mother, cried I again, is now in the possession of those delights which she so lately set before me; she no sooner forsook her feeble tottering frame, than she found her self rising into new life; the clouds of death were dispersed, and instead of pain and weakness, she found herself clothed with unfading beauty, immortal health and vigour, and in the noblest exercise of all her reasoning faculties. But alas! shall not I fall very far short of her joys? and will not my follies make me incapable of rising to so great a degree of felicity? will not she blush to see me so far beneath her? O my God, added I, strengthen my resolutions to imitate her bright example!

WITH these thoughts I sunk to sleep, and the next morning arose with a mind full of tranquillity. I spent part of the day with my friend the nun, and several of the boarders; one of these ladies, perhaps,

perhaps, observing that my affliction for Mrs. de Valville's loss, was too great to suffer me to take any delight in a promiscuous conversation; endeavoured to divert me, and make me chearful, by assuming an air of gaiety, and with much vivacity began to display her wit; but alas! I was incapable of relishing any discourse that did not soothe my grief, and therefore entreated her to change the conversation, which the disposition of my mind rendered insupportable. At this, she burst into a laugh, and desired me to consider that that tho' I had lost a friend, I had found a lover; and she thought I had made such a happy exchange, that I had no reason to complain. Here, I could not help weeping, but made her no answer; when several of the company perceiving my tears, appeared affected, and cast down their eyes; the young lady seemed pleased with what she had said; but looking round, and perceiving she had her laugh to herself, she blushed, and was quite disconcerted: when my friend the nun, after giving me a look full of affection, cried, It is cruel to offer that joy to the afflicted which they cannot taste; it is like insulting our grief; and instead of alleviating our sorrows, is the only way to render the mind inconsolable.———Believe me, Miss, added she, addressing her self to the young lady, who seemed still more confounded at her reproof, mirth is always unseasonable to a sorrowful mind; wit then grows distasteful, and is like music “when time is broke, and no proportion kept.” I thank you, Madam, returned she, if I have offended, it was not for want of regard to Miss Marianne; and as my intention was only to dissipate her gloom, I hope she will be so good as to excuse my taking a wrong method of doing it; and then added she, smiling, I shall not be very sorry for

for having behaved ill, since it has been the occasion of a reproof, that will prevent my ever being guilty of the like fault again. But to be serious, Miss, continued she, I don't think you can have such vast cause for affliction, and sure it is not unreasonable to imagine, that your happiness should indeed counterbalance it, and render it quite supportable. I grant, said I, in some measure, it does so; but you must be a stranger to the dear deceased lady's virtues, to think I can reflect, that I must see her no more without the severest grief; how hard is it continued I, with a sigh, to break those ties which are founded on friendship and reason! a mind that is at ease, can easily offer motives of consolation, and range a thousand arguments which it thinks unanswerable; but these motives don't reach the heart, which is incapable of banishing its passions.

HERE I was interrupted by a lay-sister, who came to tell me that two persons waited for me in the parlour; at which all the ladies rose up, took their leave of me, and retired to their respective apartments. I went down, and as I expected, found Mr. de Valville, and Mrs. Dorfin waiting for me. My dear, said the latter, I have brought a lover, who is doubly disconsolate; he comes to entreat you to pity him; and desires me to intercede with you not to deprive him of your company at a time when the situation of his mind renders your absence most insupportable. I must join with him in repeating my request, that you would immediately leave the convent, and accept of my house, you may there have an opportunity of comforting each other. It would be unkind to deny us such a reasonable demand. I don't know what answer to make you, Madam, returned I, I should be very sorry to give either of you the least pain;

pain ; and I assure you, I did not chuse this retreat out of any desire to shun either yours, or Mr. de Valville's company, but purely from a regard to decency, and to prevent censure. And tho' I flattered my self with the thoughts that I should here have an opportunity to indulge my grief, yet I could not separate my self from you without a great deal of reluctance. Besides you know I had not taken leave of the convent ; the abbess expected me every day to return to it again, and my mother's death rendered it proper that I should take this opportunity of doing it, that I might let her know of my intention to leave them, before I did it altogether. Here Valville lifted up his eyes with an air of satisfaction ; O my dear Marianne, said he, you will accompany us then, will not you ? we shall drive directly to this lady's house ; she may speak to the abbess immediately, and you will soon be ready. No, Sir, returned I, you are too precipitate ; rather as there is no apparent reason for our being in such haste, we must defer my going till to-morrow at least ; mean time, I will prepare for my departure, and bid my friends adieu. Mrs. Dorfin thought me in the right, and went to meet the abbess in another parlour. As soon as we were alone, Valville addressed me with the most tender and affecting air. My dear, said he, did you know how insupportable, this short absence has been to me ; was you sensible how heavily the lazy hours have past along, I am sure you would pity me ; you might then, my lovely charmer, form some idea of the sincerity and excess of my passion. I believe it sincere, Sir, returned I, and I love to hear you tell me so, but let us defer for some time these kind of discourses ; I ought yet not to entertain no ideas but such as relate to my dear mamma ; we will talk of her virtues, till we plant them

them in our minds, and we shall find some consolation in mingling our cares.——What my dear, cried he, can we talk of her without mentioning our passion, which was so agreeable to her, and which she blessed with her expiring breath; were not our affairs more at her heart, than those that more immediately concerned herself? our love and her tenderness are so interwoven, that we shall never be able to consider them separately long together.

THIS discourse lasted till Mrs. Dorbin returned, when she told me, the abbess desired to speak with me, and then after some affectionate caresses, retired with my dear Valville, who handed her down stairs. They were no sooner gone, than I went to wait upon the abbess, who after making me sit down by her, told me she was very sorry I was going to leave her; My dear child, said she, as thou art a person of reason and prudence, I was in hopes, that thou wouldst have taken the veil; but alas! poor girl! thou dost not know what thou art doing, thou art unacquainted with the snares of a worldly life, and therefore art running into temptations. That beauty, added she, was never designed to be thrown away on a mortal; no, heaven made thee for itself, and thou shouldst consecrate thy charms to him that gave them thee. Here thou mightest devote thy self to the contemplation and enjoyment of God. What an acceptable sacrifice thou wouldst be to him! the blessed virgin, whose beauty while on earth exceeded that of the children of men, and who, happy woman! held her God to her breast, and gave suck to the prince of peace; she, I say, will smile on thy vows, and bless thee with her favour; nay, she will command her son to bless thee too, and thou wilt be ravished with the sweetness of his love.

love. Mrs. de Valville loved thee, and I suppose has left thee great part of her estate ; and how canst thou bestow it better, than by securing a place in heaven with it, which thou wilt certainly do, by settling it upon a convent. — I could not help smiling at this religious cant, this monstrous prophanation of sacred things, to the sordid views of interest, and a vile spirit of covetousness ; I reflected while she was speaking, upon the tender reception she gave me when I offered myself, before Mrs. de Valville ; the flattering epithets she so liberally bestowed upon me, and the cold reception I afterwards met with, when she found I desired to be admitted out of charity. I confess, Madam, returned I, as soon as she had done, I am not able to enter into the engagements you propose to me, my affections are not sufficiently weaned from the things of this world, to render it possible for me to forsake them all at once. Besides, Madam, I am not certain that the lady you mention, has left me any thing. This I could safely say, because Valville had forbore mentioning the contents of the will to me, and I expected this declaration would make her change her tone, and have greater weight with her than any arguments I could make use of ; but I was mistaken ; she informed me that Mrs. Dorfin had told her, that my mother had left me something considerable, and then made use of all the arguments she could think of to persuade me to believe that her care for my soul, induced her to wish that I would lay out my estate in the manner she proposed ; since that alone, she said, could procure me the most solid happiness in this life, as well as eternal felicity in the next. I thanked her for interesting herself so much in my happiness, told her I would consider on what she had said, and went away very well

well pleased, that I disengaged myself from such a troublesome visit.

It being a very fine evening, I no sooner left the abbess, than I went to take a walk in the garden; the winds were still, and the evening perfectly calm; the sun had just sunk beneath the horizon, and given way to the solemn shades of approaching night. I walked here for some time, indulging an agreeable contemplation, and then retired to my own apartment. In my way I happened to meet the haughty lady of quality I have mentioned already, who with a sneer told me she heard I was about taking the veil; and was very glad to find I had formed such a resolution, and hoped I would renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world with a good grace. Perhaps, Miss, said I, you may be mistaken; I assure you I have no such design. Nay, said she, I think you cannot do better, and there can be no great mortification in resigning the pleasures of life, when we have no probability of our ever tasting them; I hope, my pretty creature, you are not so vain as to think that Valville will ever marry you.——I made her no answer, but retired to my chamber, a little nettled. My friend the nun hearing me shut the door, rapped softly at it, on which I opened it, and she came in. The abbess, said she, has spread a report, that she almost prevailed upon you to be a nun, and as she has found you have a fortune to bestow upon her house, I know she will spare no pains to make you one; she knows how your affairs stand with Mr. de Valville, and I am afraid she will endeavour to make a breach between you, that she may remove all obstacles that may prevent her from putting her designs in execution; therefore don't be prevailed upon to stay any longer than you can help.

help. I should, my dear, esteem your company as a great blessing! but I know I can't obtain it, without your being miserable; and I have too much friendship for you, to prefer my satisfaction to the happiness of your whole life. Beware of her artifices, and more especially guard your self against her flattery and pretended tenderness; it is deceitful; and you would find too soon, that it is only a pretence to keep you in her power. Disbelieve every thing she says, and you will be out of danger; but if you give any credit to her you will be undone. I thanked her for her advice; she wished me a good night, and was going to leave me, when I desired her to stay a little longer, and repeated what the haughty young lady had said to me, just before I entered the room. I am more than ever convinced, that my suspicions are just, said she, as soon as I had done. Miss Varthorn no sooner quarrelled with Valville, than she made this lady, who is your professed enemy, her confidante; they were ever together till she left Paris, and this has been heard to say many ill-natured things of you; but what is very remarkable is, that as soon as you left the abbess, she was sent for to her, and by what she said, I believe they had been contriving how to make you suspect your lover's constancy. Pray take care that you are not imposed on; I will assure you, you are in more danger than you imagine, stand therefore upon your guard; for you may be sure, I would not give you these cautions only to terrify you; she then wished me again a good-repose and retired.

ALL these cautions alarmed me extremely, I did not know what to think, and soon found that my mind could entertain other ideas, than those of grief for the loss of my dear mother. I before thought my self secure of Valville, and imagined

that

that I had nothing to do now, but to wait till a decent respect to her memory would permit us to think of our own happiness : but my fears of being deprived of him, awaked a variety of quite different sensations in my breast ; and I spent great part of the night in fortifying myself against all the arguments they could make use of to persuade me to take the veil.

THE next day I heard nothing from the abbess, and tho' I expected Mrs. Dorlin to come for me in her coach, and waited impatiently to see her, yet I was disappointed ; however my friend the nun endeavoured to comfort me, and at night told me, that the abbess had sent a letter to Mrs. Dorlin's by a servant, and at the same time assured me, that as almost every one in the house loved me, nothing could be done without our being informed of it ; and made me hope that I should soon get out of their hands ; but at the same time desired me not to seem to suspect any thing, but pretend to believe every thing the abbess should say to me. This night I was much more uneasy than the former ; I knew not how to behave ; I burst into tears, and lamented my unhappy condition ; Shall I never know an end of my miseries, cried I ? I was born to be wretched, and must expect always to continue so ! Is it not enough, that I have lost my mamma, but I must lose Valville too ? must I be stripped at once of all that is dear to me ? robbed of every comfort, and never enjoy a moment's solid repose ? — But why do I despair, added I ? has not providence hitherto extricated me out of greater difficulties ? Valville sure cannot be long imposed upon ; and Mrs. Dorlin is too wise, has too much penetration, to be the dupe of their wicked artifices. Good God ! continued I, with

a deep sigh, disappoint the designs of my enemies.

THE next morning, I arose with a mind perfectly disordered; and was no sooner dressed than the abbess sent word, that she desired I would breakfast with her. I wiped my eyes, and resolved to dissemble my uneasiness as much as possible; as I entered her room, she threw her arms about my neck, and kissed me; My dear, said she, thou dost not know how much I love thee; and I am sure, thou canst not imagine, how sorry I am at the thought that thou wilt leave me. O blessed lady! how shall I bear the loss of this dear child? but come, daughter, sit down, I was afraid thou wouldst leave us yesterday; but am very glad thou hast changed thy mind; hast thou considered what I said to thee? and may I flatter myself that I have contributed to thy resolution of staying a day or two longer with us?——O that thou didst but know the snares of this wicked world, added she, without giving me time to answer her; thou wouldst not court thy misery by going into it, but wouldst gladly chuse the peaceful retirement, where thou mightest give up thy thoughts to the sweet delights that would always attend thee in the practice of thy duty. The world, child, is a sink of iniquity and sin, and it is impossible to continue virtuous in it; and there are few or none that ever get to heaven, that have not spent their lives in a convent. Alas! how I should pity thee to see thee exposed to the follies of a worldly life. What a pity it is, that such a beautiful angel should be miserable for ever. Oh how my heart bleeds for thee! here she wiped her eyes, and was silent. While she ran on in this hypocritical strain, my heart was so full of resentment, that it was with the utmost difficulty

contained

contained myself; however, I endeavoured to appear sensible of her pretended goodness; but I did it in such an awkward manner, that I am persuaded she must have guessed at the disposition of my mind.

MADAM, said I, I am perfectly sensible of your kindness, and shall always esteem it as I ought; but you know I must not engage myself in an affair of such consequence without advising with my friends. Thy friends, child! what friends, cried she hastily? thou hast lost Mrs. de Valville, who was a sincere friend to thee; Ah! poor woman she is gone; she used to tell me, how happy she should be, could she see thee take the veil; thou canst not now consult her; she was thy only friend, and on that account, I shall pray for her as long as I live. Did Mrs. de Valville tell you so, Madam, returned I? I did not think she had any thoughts of making me a nun.—Yes, but she had tho' replied she, ever since Valville was false to thee, and really was mightily concerned about it.—But, Madam, replied I, as she is dead, I must advise with Mrs. Dorbin to whose charge she left me. Thou art in the right, returned she, and here is a letter, thou mayst give her for Mr. de Valville, who sent it for Miss Vartan; but she was gone before we received it. I will give it her to be sure, mother, said I.

HERE breakfast was brought in, and while we were eating it, she continued her pious exhortations, enumerated a great many snares I should be exposed to, and concluded with assuring me, that the welfare of my soul always employed her thoughts, and she hoped I should be prevailed upon to prefer my eternal happiness to the vain pleasures of sense.

I no sooner got leave to retire, but I hastened to find my friend the nun, who waited for me in my room. I am in amaze, Madam, said I, as soon as I saw her, I am so shocked at the abbess's impudence and hypocrisy, that I can't tell how to express myself; what gross and palpable lies! My mother, my dear mother she has the assurance to say, was very desirous of having me a nun. How! Mrs. de Valville! that is very extraordinary, returned my friend. Nothing could be more so, replied I, but she did not know that I was too well acquainted with that dear lady's sentiments to give the least credit to such a vile assertion. I have a letter too to give to Mr. de Valville, which she pretends he sent the other day for Miss Varthion; this I suppose she expects I will break open, but she shall be deceived, I will send it to him just as it is, if ever I can get an opportunity of doing it. That is prudently resolved, returned my friend, but will not you give me a more particular account of what she said to you? Here I repeated almost every word that passed between us, and when I had done, she told me, she was very glad I insisted upon advising with Mrs. Dorlin; but tho', said she, it is a very reasonable demand, I am persuaded she will not consent to it, till she finds that all other means prove ineffectual. However keep to your resolution.

You will imagine, Madam, that I was now surrounded with a thousand fears, and was ready to sink into despair, at the dreadful apprehension of being confined from the man I loved; especially considering he might be imposed upon, and therefore by false suggestions be induced to abandon me; but if these are your thoughts you are quite mistaken; for I never had a greater presence of mind than now; the abbess's deceitful
caresses

caresses and impudent lies so surprized me, that I had hardly leisure to attend to my affliction. I resolved with my friend's assistance, to counter-plot her in all her artifices, and did not doubt but I should meet with success. No wonder, said I, that religion is so much despised, since it is made a pretence to cover the blackest designs and the vilest purposes. What a heap of inconsistent nonsense has she invented to cover her avarice! sanctified nonsense, and pious stupidity! The religion which comes from heaven is certainly designed to "refine our morals, and civilize the rudeness of nature;" to render the mind pleased with itself, and happy in the enjoyment of the sovereign good, the rectitude of an enlightened and enlarged understanding; to love what is truly lovely, and to hate what is base and detestable. O my God! cried I to myself, help me to unravel her dark designs. Thou most perfect and amiable being! while I can regard thee as my friend, I will never despair of thy protection. To proceed.

AFTER some further conversation, in which the nun told me I had no reason to doubt a happy conclusion of this affair, since I had nothing to do, but to arm myself with patience; she added, You know I have promised to give you the history of my life; and I shall never perhaps find a better opportunity for doing it than I have now, besides it will be some amusement to you, and make the time of your involuntary confinement pass away less heavily than it would otherwise do. I sincerely thanked her; told her it was extremely kind thus to contrive to make me forget my cares, and then desired her to proceed.

The Life of Miss DE TERVIERE.

YOU have thought, my dear Marianne, that you have been the most unhappy person upon earth; this is a misfortune we are too apt to create to ourselves; for the person that thinks herself miserable is indeed really so. Tho' you have not been blessed with tasting the sweets of a filial affection, you have still greater advantages; you have a most excellent character, a great deal of good sense, and a stock of virtue that is of more value than all the benefits you could receive from the most indulgent parent; besides, a form so lovely as to make you universally admired; these have now procured you advantages, which may make the rest of your life happy! but alas! there is no condition in life, however it may flatter us at a distance, which can secure us from misery, or which may not be the cause of our misfortunes; for every mortal is subject to a variety of terrible events.

I AM the daughter of a country gentleman of a very ancient and honourable family; tho' their constantly residing at their own castles, at a great distance from court, has rendered them very little known. Miss de Trele, for so my mother was called, was as nobly descended as my father: she had been educated in a convent, where she was a boarder; but being taken out to assist at the nuptials of one of her relations, my father happened to see her, and became perfectly enamoured. She in her turn felt a reciprocal tenderness for him; but her mother, who was a widow, thought her self obliged to oppose their mutual affection.

She

She had a large family, and did not think my father (who was a rich heir) would ever be permitted to marry her youngest daughter, a lady who had scarcely any portion to bring him but her extraction ! she told my father, there was not the least reason to hope for it, and endeavoured to persuade him to suppress his passion, since it would probably come to nothing. But he opposed the difficulties she raised with so much spirit, that at last she consented he should see her daughter.

SOMETIME after this, my father mentioned it to Mr. de Terviere, and entreated him to give his consent to an union, on which, he said, depended the happiness of his life. But my grandfather, who had other views for him, laughed at his request, treated his passion as a frivolous amour, and proposed to carry him immediately to a young lady he had destined for him. My father, who thought that a step of this nature would be a kind of engagement, refused to go ; on which, my grandfather answered very coolly, without any signs of resentment, that he would never force a marriage upon him ; but could not consent to that he proposed, because his fortune would not be considerable enough to suffer him to burthen himself with a woman, who had none ; and added, that if he married Miss de Trele, he should repent it. My father concealed this answer as long as possible from Mrs. de Trele, but she no sooner knew the old gentleman's resolution, than she ordered her daughter to see her lover no more, and prepared to send her back to the convent. When distracted at the thought of losing her, he offered to marry her privately ; the old lady took offence at this proposal, which only confirmed her in her resolution of concealing her daughter ; but her two sons at

this time, returning from the army, learnt what was passing; they had a great esteem for my father, and backed his solicitations so successfully, that Mrs. de Trele at last left them masters of their sister's fate; and my father married her about sixteen or seventeen months after this. Mr. de Terviere having several reasons which induced him to fear that my father had taken this false step, resolved to be satisfied, by addressing himself to him, to know if his suspicions were just; he, surprized at the question, and afraid to confess the truth, denied it; but in a manner that plainly discovered what he endeavoured to conceal. The old gentleman soon found out the truth, and while he was coolly threatening my father, with a resentment that was afterwards attended with sad effects, my mother expected every day to bring me into the world. Thus, Marianne, you see my misfortunes were preparing for me before I saw the light.

FOUR months after this, when I was but three months and a few days old, my grandfather, whose indispositions gave him daily proofs of the decay of nature, in order to recreate himself, went on horseback, attended by two servants, to visit a gentleman who lived but about two leagues from his castle; but he had not got above half way, before he was seized with a swimming in the head, which he was very subject to. This obliged him to stop near the house of a peasant, whose wife was my nurse; he went in to sit down, when he saw the man endeavouring to make a pale and weakly child that seemed almost dying take some milk. Mr. de Terviere appeared touched with the child's condition, and asked for its nurse; for that, said he, is all she wants. My wife, said the peasant, is in bed sick of a fever, and therefore cannot suckle

suckle the child ; my son went early this morning to desire the father and mother to come and bring a nurse with them, but nobody comes, the poor child is very ill, I endeavour to keep her alive as well as I can, but if she is suffered to languish in this manner, it will be impossible to save her. I am very much concerned for the little creature, returned Mr. de Terviere.—— You would be much more so, Sir, cried the poor woman from her bed, did you know who she is. How ! whose is she then ? cried he, with some surprize. Alas ! Sir, replied the peasant, I was afraid of telling you at first, for fear of offending you ; for I am sensible, that your son married without your consent ; it is Mr. de Terviere's. The old gentleman sat a moment without making any answer, and then looking at me with a pensive and tender air, Poor child ! said he, thou hast never offended me ; make haste, added he, turning to one of the servants, and fly to my house, I remember my gardener's wife lost a boy she suckled a day or two ago, and tell her I desire her to come immediately to take the child, and I will pay her ; desire her to make as much haste as possible.

He being now pretty well recovered, kissed me and mounted his horse ; but he had not been gone above a hundred yards from the house, before his son arrived with a nurse, which he could not find sooner. The peasant in a few words, told him what had just past ; he was touched with the goodness and tenderness of his offended father, took horse again, and rode full speed after him, to express the grateful sense he had of his kindness.

MR. de Terviere who saw him at a distance, stopped and waited for his coming up to him, when he alighted, ran to him, and threw himself

on his knees, with tears in his eyes, unable to utter a word. I know, my son, what brings you hither, said he, moved at my father's behaviour; your daughter wants some assistance, and I have sent to procure it for her; if it arrives soon enough, to be of any service, I shall not leave imperfect the kindness I would do her; for it would be barbarous to preserve a life only to render it miserable. Go, my son, your daughter from henceforward shall be mine, let her be carried to my house, and take your wife thither too; she shall have the apartment which was your mother's, where I shall expect to find you both when I return at night. If Mrs. de Trele will do me the favour to sup with me, I shall be very glad of her company.——I long to be back again to alter my will, which is not now very favourable to you. Farewell, I shall be at home very early, mean while go back to your daughter, and take care of her.

My father, who continued on his knees, was still too much softened, and too full of joy, to make him any answer, but by bathing his hand, which he stooped down to give him with his tears. The old gentleman, desired him to arise, then rode away, when my father returned to me, whom he found in the nurse's arms, which he had brought with him; he conducted us both to his father's castle, gave me to the gardener's wife, and then set out to inform his wife and mother-in-law with this agreeable and, as he thought, happy event, and brought them both to his father's. Impatient to see the old gentleman, he rode out in the evening to meet him, when he met a servant, who was sent to let him know, that Mr. de Terriere was suddenly fallen into a fainting fit, and continued speechless, and who, in short, expired before he could see him. What a dreadful blow was

was this to my father and mother? what a sad change did it make in my fortune? He had made a will which was found amongst his papers, in which he left his whole estate to his other son, and reduced my father to a small pension, which the law obliged him to allow him. He had nothing to hope for from his brother, who was one of those sordid spirits, that are incapable of doing a generous action; one of those little souls, who will never do any good, but what the law obliges them to; who reckon it their duty not to leave you any thing when they may safely strip you of all; and who if they see you do a beneficent action, regard you with an eye that expresses how much they applaud themselves for not being capable of such a weakness, and will plainly tell you, I had rather you should do it than I. Such was the man my father had to deal with, so that he had no hopes of assistance from him, but was constrained to be satisfied with his pension, added to what little my mother brought him in marriage. But my father did not live long. A young gentleman of his own age, who was going to Paris to join his regiment, took him with him, and gave him a commission. And here ends both his history and his life, which he lost in the first campaign.

My mother was esteemed one of the greatest beauties in the province; and was so perfectly amiable, that notwithstanding her having but a small fortune, and being burthened with a child, she had several offers of marriage much to her advantage. But my father was then too dear to her, she preserved a too tender regard to his memory to be able to resolve to live another's. However, a man of quality who had a considerable estate in our neighbourhood, coming to spend some time there, saw my mother and loved her. This noble-

nobleman insinuated himself into her esteem by amusing her vanity, and insensibly made her forget her first husband. In short, he offered her his hand, and they were married when I was but a year and a half old. My mother's situation in life was now entirely changed; from very low circumstances she was raised to be one of the greatest ladies in the kingdom. But three weeks after their marriage I had no mother; the honours and luxury which surrounded her robbed her of her tenderness for me; and left me no place in her heart; and that little child that was before so dear to her, that she used to say put her in mind of my father whom I resembled; that infant which softened the idea of his death; and sometimes seemed to present him before her eyes, and made her almost fancy he was still alive, was almost as much forgot as he himself, and was little better than an orphan.

As my mother became with child, her attention was entirely diverted from me; she left me to the care of the house-keeper; and was so indifferent, that she did not enquire how I did, nor see me sometimes for a fortnight together. Mrs. de Trele, who lived but three leagues off, could not suspect that I, who had been the delight and comfort of her daughter, should be so entirely abandoned by her. She loved me with all the tenderness of a grandmother, and therefore as she came to dine one day with the Marquis de***, her son-in-law, she was surprized to see me sitting on the ground at play, at the gate of the court, in a most wretched disorder; my cap was tore, my hair hung about my ears, and all my clothes were in rags; at first she hardly knew me, tho' my complexion was not altered, and I appeared with a countenance gay and healthful. She asked the housekeeper's servant,
who

who stood just by with one of her mistress's children, if I was Miss de Terviere. She answered, that I was. What, this my child? this the condition she is in! cried she, with an air of tender indignation at seeing me so shamefully neglected! Pray take the child in your arms, added she, and follow me into the castle. The servant was forced to obey her, and carried me to my mother's apartment, where her woman was dressing her head. Daughter, said Mrs. de Trele as she entered the room, they would persuade me to believe that this is Miss de Terviere, sure it can't be; why, nobody would pick up her clothes; to be sure it is some miserable orphan, that your housekeeper has taken in out of charity, is it not? My mother blushed; for this manner of reproaching her for her conduct towards me, had something in it very severe, and she could not hear herself so smartly reprov'd for her barbarity to me, without being quite out of temper. I have been indisposed these three days, returned she, and have not been able to see what passed. Get you gone, and tell my impertinent housekeeper, that I desire she would come to me by and by, added she, to the girl, in a tone which shewed she was more angry at me, than with her whom she called impertinent. Mrs. de Trele, who was touched with the condition in which she found me, was no sooner alone with her, than she burst into tears, and let her see without the last disguise, how great was her compassion for me at seeing me treated thus.

THE old lady was one of those mothers, who have no other pleasure, no other employment, than what springs from discharging the duties of their families, and who know no other satisfaction, than in carefully fulfilling them. Judge then

then if with these dispositions, she could be at all satisfied with my mother. I don't know what she said to her, but it was probably more than was agreeable; for reproofs and harsh words never are of any service to us; our faults vanish from our minds, the moment we are offended. And every one might see, that she had injured me, by confirming my mother in her dislike to me.

THREE weeks after this, the marquis who designed to carry his wife to Paris to lie in there, received news which hastened his journey. And as my mother had not time in her hurry to settle her affairs, she took only one of her women with her, and left orders for me to follow her in a coach three days after, with the rest of her servants. As they had promised to send me the evening before our departure to Mrs. de Trele's, she was disturbed to find I did not come, and therefore came to the castle, to know what it was that hindered them from keeping their word. The housekeeper told her that my mother had left me to her care, with orders not to risk my life, by letting me go such a journey, if I should happen to be indisposed, and that as I was actually ill in bed of a violent cold, they in conformity to her lady's desire, were gone without me. What! has she left her to you? cried Mrs. de Trele turning her back upon her; and then ordered me to be brought down and to go with her directly to her house; where I arrived perfectly cured of my cold, a pretence my mother had used to prevent her being troubled with my company. On this, Mrs. de Trele wrote to her in the severest and most moving terms. I have perused a copy of this letter, and to let you see how sincerely affected she was at my mother's treatment of me, I will repeat part of it to you; it was in substance as follows:

follows: " You have loved Mr. de Terviere, " you have lamented his loss, said she, and yet " you injure his memory by using ill the only " pledge of his love. He left you but one child, " and yet you refuse to be a mother to her ; and " now you force me thro' my tenderness to take " care of her ; and when I am gone, I suppose " you will abandon her to the charity of others".

My mother, who was pleased that she had gained her point, patiently endured these reproaches, and satisfied herself with denying that she had any thoughts of keeping me from her ; she sent me some linen and silk for my clothes, and assured Mrs. de Trele, that she would send for me to Paris, as soon as she was brought to bed. But this was only to gain time ; she continually evaded putting her promise in execution, and made use of many pretexts, as excuses for her not sending for me ; but it was happy for me, that as my mother's heart froze, and lost every sentiment of maternal tenderness, the old lady's grew more warm and affectionate. She now began to write but very seldom, and when she did, hardly ever mentioned me ; so that in two years and a half's time, she seemed to have perfectly forgot that there was such a person in the world. Thus I was dear only to Mrs. de Trele, indifferent to the relations I had in that country, unknown to those in the other provinces, troublesome to my two aunts, my mother's sisters, who hated me on account of my grandmother's regard for me ; I had no other prospect before me, than that of her friendship, which must necessarily be but of a very short duration. In this manner did I pass my infancy, till I was twelve years old, during which time my aunts whom I have mentioned, married persons of the same disposition with themselves.

But

But at last Mrs. de Trele, who was pretty old, fell sick; her condition cured me of my levity, and gave me a habit of thinking, which made me sensible of my own wretched state. The servants seeing her past recovery, shamefully neglected her, and my aunts who came to see her, treated me with the utmost indifference and disrespect. The good old lady perceived it with a visible concern; she reproached them with their unkindness to me in the most tender manner, with a mildness very different from her usual way of speaking to them on such occasions, as if she endeavoured to beg their mercy for me. This I could not help taking notice of, and from thence drawing a presage of some frightful impending evil. And tho' I was too young to reason distinctly upon it; yet I was seized with a terror which rendered me mute, humble, and fearful. Besides Mrs. de Trele's whole behaviour, when her daughters were absent, contributed to open my eyes. She called me to her, took hold of my hand, and spoke to me with such tenderness, as if she meant to comfort me, dissipate my alarms, and raise me from that humiliation of soul into which she saw I was fallen.

ONE day a lady of the neighbourhood, who was her intimate friend, came to see her, and she desired to speak with her in private. When I stepped into a little closet in the room, and out of a tender and uneasy curiosity, resolved to listen to their conversation. I am very much concerned for this dear little child, said Mrs. de Trele; it is only upon her account I desire to live; but God is the supreme disposer of all things, he is in a peculiar manner the father of the orphan. Have you been so kind, added she to speak to Mr. Villot?

(this

(this was a rich inhabitant of a neighbouring borough, who for above thirty years had farmed Mr. de Terviere's, my grandfather's estate; and had gained the greatest part of his fortune, in his family.) Yes, said her friend, I have been with him this morning, he says he will conform himself to your desire, and will come to assure you of it himself. So, pray make yourself easy, Miss de Terviere is not so much an orphan as you imagine; pray, Madam, think better of her mother; 'tis true she neglects her now, but she must infallibly love the little charming creature, as soon as she sees her.

THO' they spoke very low, I heard every thing they said; the term orphan, at first surprized me extremely, as I knew I had a mother; but Mrs. de Trele's friend made me sensible of her meaning, by letting me know that my mother did not love me. I had not yet been fully acquainted with her indifference, and I could not now think of it, without bursting into tears, and being filled with the greatest consternation.

A FEW days after this, Mrs. de Trele was so ill, that her daughters were sent for; but she died before they came. They stayed four or five days in the house, in order to pay their last duties to their mother, and set every thing in order in the absence of their brothers, one of whom was at Paris, and the other in the army. There were a thousand debates between the two sisters, who sometimes quarrelled, and sometimes united against a man to whom their eldest brother, who had been informed of his mother's illness, had sent a letter of attorney from Paris. These clamours made the house continually in an indecent uproar; for an insatiable avarice, and a greedy thirst of plunder, deprived

deprived them of every degree of tenderness for each other, and even left no room in their hearts for any concern for their mother's death. But when they found Mrs. de Trele had left me a diamond-ring worth two thousand livres, they lost all patience, could not bear to see me, and even reflected upon their mother in a very severe and injurious manner. I had shut my self up in a little room, where they had ordered me to go, because my cries and lamentations were troublesome to them; here I indulged my affliction, till the excess of my grief rendered me silent. Every thing about me had a solitary and melancholy gloom; I was looked upon as nobody; every face seemed unfriendly, or at least looked with indifference upon me; and all of them appeared more strange than if I had never known them. I stood in this place as in a kind of sanctuary from the rough usage of my aunts, in which I was detained thro' the terror of being obliged to appear before them; and where I even trembled every time I heard the sound of their voices. Can you believe me, Marianne, when I tell you that I cannot even now think of this dreadful situation, without feeling a sensible terror. I had ever before been entirely unacquainted with this strange kind of misery; my heart had been softened by my grandmother's tenderness, so that I had never before felt what it was to have the least trouble of mind; but I had now a sadness lurking in the very bottom of my soul, which preyed upon my heart, and sunk me into the most cruel despair.—We are only frightened at the thought of belonging to nobody, but sink into nothing in the presence of relations like these.

At last my situation began to change; my aunts had nothing more to dispute about, and there-

therefore prepared to go home with their husbands who were come for them; when they appointed an old servant of Mrs. de Trele's, a vine-dresser, who lodged in a little house in her court, to be house-keeper till the seals could be taken off. He came to fetch me from the little room in which I had hid my self, and desired me to follow him into the hall where they were all at breakfast. I did so with the utmost reluctance; my eyes were cast down, I trembled, turned pale, and durst not look at the two dreadful sisters. They then debated what should be done with me, and as both refused to keep me, it was concluded at last, that I should stay with the poor vine-dresser. But they had no sooner agreed how to dispose of me than Mr. Villot, whom Mrs. de Trele had wrote to just before she died, entered the hall; I was transported at seeing him, and entreated him to carry me to his house; he told me he came for that purpose, and with the two ladies consent, would take me away immediately. My aunts readily complied, my box was brought down, and committed to the care of a peasant who was to carry it for us. When one of my aunts told me she would write to my mother, bid me be a good girl, and then both stepped into their chaise, and drove away without kissing me. We set out soon after, and presently arrived at Mr. Villot's, whose wife received me with an air of gaiety, and a countenance so affable, that she presently became familiar to me. As my aunts had imposed silence on my grief, I here found the satisfaction of crying as much as I pleased. A circumstance that was accompanied with a peculiar kind of pleasure.

SOME of the nuns entering at this part of the story, obliged Miss de Terviere to break off;

I shall therefore, Madam, do so too, and defer the sequel of her history, which contains scenes so extremely affecting that they must melt the most obdurate heart, to the next part, in which I shall fully atone for the shortness of this.

The End of the TENTH PART.

THE

THE
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART XI.

YOU must allow, Madam, that I could not well be more expeditious than I am now ; I began the history of my friend the nun, in my last part, which you received last week, and I now send you the remainder.

As soon as the nuns had left us, and we had dined, I went into my friend's room, and desired her to proceed with her story. When she resumed :

I HAD not been at Mr. Villot's above two or three days, before I wrote to my mother, to let her know where I was. In her answer, she made use of several pretended reasons to excuse her not sending for me, but promised to do it in a few days ; but not hearing from her I wrote again, and continued to importune her with my letters till I grew weary : at last I found that, notwithstanding her promises, she had really no intention of ever having me near her ; however she sometimes sent me a little money to buy me some clothes, and allowed Mr. de Villot a trifle for my board ; but tho' it was very inconsiderable, it did not
make

make this generous friend look coldly upon me, nor abate the tenderness and respect of any of his family. As for my aunts, I hardly need mention them, since I saw them not above once or twice in a year at most, and never received any benefit from them.

HERE I got acquainted with four or five young ladies in the neighbourhood, who were agreeable companions, and spent my time almost entirely with them, till I was near seventeen. I went sometimes too to see a widow lady of about forty, who lived at a castle near half a league from our borough; she had been one of my mother's most intimate acquaintance, and was a person of a most pleasing carriage; a genteel mien and fresh complexion with a good plight of body, gave her an air of beauty, which joined to the appearance of the greatest sanctity and austerity, together with an intimacy with all the devout in that part of the country, engaged the veneration and esteem of every one; for there is something more edifying in the piety of a fine woman, than of any other. I was soon attracted by this lady's mild and obliging behaviour, and she wrote to my mother to let her know that I frequently visited her. As she knew not what to do with me, and was unwilling ever to see me at Paris, lest my country education should motify her pride, she desired this lady to inspire me with a desire to take the veil. This she undertakes immediately, and accordingly engages all the religious of the neighbourhood, that they might contribute to the success of her enterprize; she immediately redoubles her caresses and professions of friendship, keeps me almost every night to sup with her, obliges me frequently to lie in her house, and scarce can she permit me to be a moment out of her sight. Mr. and Mrs.

Villot rejoiced to see my affection for her, they commended me, and appeared to esteem me much more upon her account, and every body else seemed to do so too. Flattered with this general applause, my devotion seemed to encrease every day, and my mien gradually received an air of austerity. I soon became a partner in all this lady's exercises, she shut herself up with me to read pious lectures, and carried me to hear all the sermons she could get intelligence of. Ah! my dear predestinated, would she say to me, (for she and her pious friends then called me by no other name) what an affecting spectacle is the piety of such an amiable girl as thee! I cannot help looking upon thee without praising God, and being inflamed with a more ardent love for him. Oh without doubt, cried her religious friends, her piety edifies us all; God has appointed her for a more holy state; the world stands in need of such noble and bright examples, and you, child, will be a shining instance of the triumphs of his grace. These discourses were accompanied with an air and tone which expressed the greatest surprise, and the most profound esteem and veneration; while my presence seemed to strike them with a sacred awe. I was pleased with being thus honoured, and the widow had great hopes of bringing me easily to comply with her design. Her house was situated near a convent, where we used to go once or twice a week; she had a relation there who was acquainted with her designs, and promoted it with all the mistaken zeal and monastic cunning she was capable of. I say *mistaken*, because nothing sure can be less pardonable, than the little artifices they make use of to seduce a young woman into a desire of being a nun; they ought rather to exaggerate the consequences

quences of such an engagement than prevent her seeing them. I never went to the convent, but our religious friend squeezed my hand, and spoke to me with a kind of holy tenderness; while the nuns flocked about me, bestowed on me the most affectionate caresses, and enchanted me with the pretty names they gave me, and the devout and simple graces which accompanied all their actions. I never returned from this convent, but the widow spoke to me in raptures of the happy life those girls lived there. While I was so delighted with their seeming agreeable and peaceful situation, that I was almost ready voluntarily to enter into the same state; a new adventure for that time happily changed my resolution.

ONE day as the widow was indisposed, I asked her to let her chambermaid go with me to the convent, to return a book I had borrowed of one of the nuns; the lady was ill in bed, and a young woman of about five or six and twenty, of a tall and genteel appearance came to the grate. I had observed that she always appeared less chearful than the rest, and had a countenance full of melancholy softness; and tho' she always spoke to me with the greatest affability, she was the only person that never gave me any friendly names. As she then appeared more uneasy than ever, I imagined that she was not well, and told her, I was sorry to see her look so much out of order. She said she had had a very indifferent night, and offered to call some of her sisters to keep me company. No, Miss, replied I, I cannot stay above an hour; besides I shall soon have an opportunity of seeing our good friends, without being obliged to leave them. How! without leaving them! returned she, have you then a desire to be one of us? Yes, I am more than half resolved, replied I, and intend to write to my mother

mother, to let her know it. Your happiness has made me desirous of sharing it with you, added I, putting my hand thro' the grate to take her's, which she gave me without making me any answer; I then perceived that the tears came into her eyes, and she held down her head, as if to hide her concern. I was filled with a surprise, which for some time kept me silent, when recovering myself and looking upon her, Tell me, cried I, why do you weep? was I deceived in thinking you happy? At the word happy her tears redoubled; and I was touched without knowing the cause of her affliction. At last after many sighs, which escaped her in spite of herself, Alas! Miss, returned she, I am not happy; but pray keep that a secret; and I beg you would never tell any body that I could not refrain letting fall some tears before you; and I will trust you with the cause of them; it will not be unuseful for you to know it. Here she stopped to wipe her eyes. Go on, my dear friend, cried I weeping too, and hide nothing from me. I feel myself afflicted at your uneasiness, and I shall regard the confidence you repose in me, as a favour that I shall never forget.

You are desirous of being a nun, cried she; the caresses of our sisters, and I believe the insinuations of Mrs. de St. Hermieres (this was the name of the widow) make you inclined to enter into our state; you fancy you have a call, tho' you would perhaps have never thought so, had you not been deceived by their allurements. Beware, Miss, lest these dispositions vanish with the circumstances which inspire you with them. How dreadful would it be should you be mistaken! we ought to have a natural relish for the peculiar duties of the convent, or else we cannot taste any satisfaction in them. We have our troubles,

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which the world knows nothing of, and we ought to be born with a disposition to support them too. I entered this convent at your age, and I was induced to it from the same motives as your self. I had an affection for a nun whom I thought my friend; and, tenderly caressed by all the sisters, I loved them so much, that I thought I could never be unhappy in their company. I was a younger daughter, and all our family contributed to the charm that drew me hither: How delightful, said I to myself, must it be to spend my time with those amiable ladies, whom it is a virtue to love! how sweet will it be to employ myself in the service of heaven, in a peace and serenity so charming, so divine! Alas! Miss, what childish folly! deceived in the situation of my heart, I fancied that it was piety prompted me to chuse this retreat, when it was only the pleasure of being with these dear girls, and tasting the sweets of their friendship. This was the childish attraction that brought me hither, this all my vocation; no body had the goodness to undeceive me, and let me know the uneasiness that would follow. However this prison began to grow burthensome, and I became disgusted towards the end of my noviciate; but this they affectionately told me was only a temptation, and I had not the courage to resist them. The day for my taking the vows arrived; I suffered myself to be prevailed upon, and did whatever they bid me with an emotion which suspended all my reflections. Others decided my lot, and I was only a stupid spectator of the eternal engagements I took upon me.

HER tears began here to flow afresh, and she could not pronounce these last words without a voice interrupted with sighs: her affliction at first touched me, but here I was in a fright; her motives

tives for entering the convent so exactly resembled mine, and I saw my history so plainly in her's, that I trembled at the dangers I had escaped; and at once grew disgusted at the house, as well as those that were in it. After a short pause, I thanked her for the confidence she had reposed in me, when she again intreated me to conceal what she had told me. I sincerely promised I would do so, and my tears had such an effect upon her, that she freely told me, she had other cares I was a stranger to; and pulling a letter out of her bosom, without any direction, she gave it me with a trembling hand; since my condition raises your pity, resumed she, pray deliver me from the danger this note exposes me to. But have you not read it returned I, has it not been opened? No, replied she; but I fear I should have opened it, and was going to do so, when my kind genius brought you hither. My resolutions are now wavering, and I even regret my having given it you, and fain would have it again; but don't indulge me; and if you read it, I desire you never to mention the contents of it to me. It comes from my mortal enemy; from a man that is stronger than my reason and all my reflections; a man who has lost his senses, and would make me lose mine, and has already but too well succeeded; it is ****. Judge of my surprise, when I found it was an abbé, of seven or eight and twenty, whom I saw almost every day at Mrs. de St. Hermiere's; a man who assumed an air of the greatest piety, and whose conduct I had hitherto thought altogether blameless. My astonishment was too visible for her not to take notice of it immediately; I know, resumed she, that you see him often, he has deceived me, and perhaps himself too; he loves me, but pray shew him this letter, tell him that I have not read it, and let him know that

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that I will see him no more; that pity for me, and a regard to his own honour ought to induce him to leave me in repose. Alas! I am unable to resist his attacks, continued she, and can't tell what would be the consequence, should I see him again. I am capable of running away with him, of taking away my own life, or of any thing else. I foresee that nothing but horror would attend his designs, and we should be plunged in an abyss, in which we should both perish.

THIS discourse was accompanied with abundance of tears, and when she had done, her countenance was so much altered, that I could hardly know her again. I wept with her, and we continued for some time speechless; at last I broke silence, and endeavoured to calm the disorder of her soul. As you have a tender and virtuous mind, said I, you need not fear that heaven will forsake you in your distress; you will soon triumph over your passion, your trouble will vanish, and you will be delighted with the reflection that you have abandoned a wretch, who would infallibly have ruined you.

THE bell here called the young lady to her devotions, when she arose hastily, and after desiring me to favour her again with my company, left me. What I had just heard, had created such a revolution in my mind, that I had sat for some time quite motionless. I seemed as if waked out of a lethargy, and was in such a surprise, that I did not think of leaving the parlour; but in the midst of my revery, I perceived it grew dark, when I went again to the chambermaid who had brought me thither. I was then quite cured of my desire of being a nun; I was frightened to think I had been so near entering into that state, as almost to have

have given my word for it ; but happily I had not yet gone so far.

MRS. de St. Hermieres, to whom I returned, was very desirous of having me stay all night ; but I not only wanted to be alone, to indulge my new reflections, but was afraid that she would guess by my looks, what was the disposition of my mind ; I therefore wanted time to enable me to assume a countenance which might not betray me. As I was going home, I met the Abbé who had caused the nun to shed so many tears ; I was entering into Mr. Villot's house, and had therefore dismissed the chambermaid. The young hypocrite, with a most devout mien, stopped to pay me his respects. We shall not, Miss, be so happy as to enjoy your company to-night at Mrs. de St. Hermiere's, where I am going to supper. No, Sir, replied I, but I can give you some news of Miss. de ****, whom I have just left, and who has spoke much of you. I am obliged to her, returned he, I see her sometimes ; pray how does she do ? Tho' it is but three hours since you left her, said I, she is so cast down, that you would hardly know her again ; I left her bathed in tears, on account of a young man, whose visits fill her with horror, and from whom she is resolved to receive no more as long as she lives ; she desired me to return him this letter, added I, taking it out of my pocket, where it accidentally opened. 'Tis probable the nun might have halfbroke open the seal ; however, this must doubtless have persuaded him that I had read it, and consequently that I was acquainted with his villainy. He took the note with a trembling hand, Your servant, Sir, said I, as I gave it him ; fear nothing from me, for I promise you an inviolable secrecy ; but fear every thing from my friend, who is resolved to expose you, if you

continue to trouble her with your visits. She had not desired me to frighten him with this menace; but I thought I might add this on my own accord: In effect it succeeded, he was too frightened ever to revive the intrigue; so that I saved the nun, or rather her virtue, from his persecution; tho' there were some moments, in which she would have given her life to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing him again, as she told me afterwards, but her prayers and tears removed this disordered state of mind, and restored her tranquility. I returned the next day after dinner to Mrs. de St. Hermiere's, who was shut up in her oratory, while two or three of her friends were waiting for her in the parlour. As soon as she came down, Are you here, my dear, cried she, in a whining tone, I have just been thinking of thee; the time is coming, when I must no longer have the pleasure of seeing you with us; but thou wilt be the better for it. We are going to be separated from her, gentlemen, added she, and it is in the house of God we must hereafter look for our predestinated. Why so, Madam? cried I, with a smile I put on to hide a rising blush. Why, my dear, returned she, I have received joyful news for thee, the Marchioness thy mother has sent me a letter in which she consents to thy taking the veil; she says, she herself would gladly exchange her present condition, for that thou art disposed to embrace, and does not value the world enough to detain thee in it contrary to thy desires; these are her very words, and I foresee thou wilt soon make use of her permission, added she, giving me the letter. Here she took notice, that I let fall some tears: What is the matter, Miss, resumed she, one would imagine this letter gives you pain; did I make a wrong judgment of you? are we
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all deceived? sure you have not changed your mind, have you child? I wish, Madam, you had consulted me before you wrote to my mother, returned I with a sigh, you have encreased her aversion to me, for I will never be a nun, providence never appointed that state for me. At this, Mrs. de St. Hermieres stood motionless, and all the company looked upon one another, and lifted up their hands to heaven, with a visible surprize. You will not be a nun then! cried she, in a plaintive tone that expressed her astonishment. It was a severe mortification to her, to be robbed of the hopes of an adventure so very edifying to the world, and so much to the credit of her piety; for after that stock of devotion I had acquired from her example, I only wanted a nun's habit to become her master-piece. Don't be disturbed, Madam, said one of the company, with an air of confidence; this is no more than I expected, it is only the last effort of our common enemy. You will see her perhaps to-morrow fly to that happy and holy retreat, which is well worth the trouble of going through a few temptations to obtain. No, Sir, returned I, with the tears still in my eyes; no, this is not a temptation, but a resolution which is the result of deliberate thought. If so, Miss, I sincerely pity you, said Mrs. de St. Hermieres, with a coolness, that was a presage of the indifference which followed.

FROM this time I found such an entire change in their behaviour, that I could hardly know again any of the society. I was disgraced in their opinion, and all their tender regards and endearing expressions were changed into such a disrespectful indifference and disregard, that I could hardly believe myself in the same company. My visits to the castle became now so very rare that I did

not see Mrs. de St. Hermieres above once in a month, who constantly gave me a cold but civil reception.

ABOUT five months after this, one of this lady's footmen came from her to desire my company to dinner. I was surprized at the invitation, which appeared so new to me, but more so to see her resume that affectionate behaviour which she had not indulged for a long time. I found her with a gentleman of about fifty, of a pale, grave, and meagre aspect. Come, my dear, let me embrace you, said she, as soon as she saw me, I have never ceased to love you, though I have ceased telling you so; let us think no more of my silence on that head, or on the motives which caused it. God does every thing for the best, the happiness that is offered you, comforts me for that you have lost, and you shall know what I mean after dinner. While she was speaking, I happened to cast my eyes on the gentleman, who modestly cast down his with a grave and respectful countenance, and with the air of one who had some concern in what she was telling me.

AFTER dinner, he arose to take a turn in the garden. Miss, said Mrs. de St. Hermieres, as soon as he was gone, you have no fortune, your mamma will give you none, but this gentleman, who is the Baron de Sercour, has a very large one; he is a man of very great piety, and thinks he cannot make a better use of his riches, than by sharing them with a young lady of quality of your virtue, whose merit deserves a fortune. He offers you his hand, and if you consent, the marriage will be concluded in a very few days, which will secure you a very considerable estate. You have nothing to do, but to write to your mamma

I think you have no room to hesitate upon the course you ought to take, if you consider the circumstances you are in, and those you may hereafter be reduced to. The Baron is not of an age that will render him absolutely distasteful; I confess he has an ill state of health, but added she, lowering her voice, it is probable he won't live long; and if you should lose the Baron, he will leave you what will make his memory dear to you; and I assure you, the state of a young, rich, tho' afflicted widow, is less painful than that of a lady of quality, without a fortune to support it. Do you accept of the proposal?

I WAS some moments without answering her. I was not unacquainted with the badness of my situation, and saw the advantages that would attend such an union. 'Tis true his penitent melancholy look rendered him disagreeable to me, and I could not without reluctance think of accepting him for a husband; but I may accustom myself to him, thought I, and there are few uneasinesses, which plenty is not a remedy for; upon this, I took my resolution. Well, Madam, said I at last, if you will write to my mother, I will conform to whatever she pleases. The Baron presently after this, came again into the room, when I felt a palpitation at my heart, trembled at seeing him, and could not help imagining that he was already my master. Sir, said Mrs. de St. Hermieres, as he entered, I must inform you that here is your lady, I found no difficulty to persuade her to accept of that title. She does me a great deal of honour, returned he, saluting me with a satisfaction that gave some vivacity to his eyes, which usually appeared very dull. He then began a conversation, suitable to a devotee in love.

HERE I could not help interrupting the nun; How is it possible, Madam, said I, you could think of giving your person to a man, to whom you could not give your heart. In my opinion, we have no right to dispose of ourselves, but where we are called by the tender tie of souls: to consent to be another's, without these dear engagements, is to consent to be miserable, by acting contrary to that law of nature, which has given us passions and propensities, that, when conducted by reason, point out the object, and are the only foundation of true felicity: we have surely no right to enter into bonds, which we have not the inclination, the ability to fulfil, and which therefore not all the powers on earth can ever render sacred; and really I can only look on these matches, as a legal kind of prostitution; since that tender friendship, that sympathy of souls is wanting, which is necessary to constitute that indissoluble union, which is the essence of marriage.

INDEED you are in the right, returned M^{rs} de Terviere; but I did not then know what love was, and therefore had not the delicacy which that passion inspires; and consequently could have none of these scruples. It was agreed, that the baron should write to my mother that very day, that M^{rs}. de St. Hermieres should send another letter at the same time, and that I should add a line or two at the bottom of her's, to shew that all was done with my consent. It was concluded too, that it would be proper to keep this affair as secret as possible till the day of our marriage; because the baron had a nephew, who was his heir, from whom it was necessary it should be concealed.

Two days after this, as I was walking in our garden, I was met by the abbé, who having lost all
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hopes of preferment, had thrown off his gown ; but had still the character of a man of the most profound piety. Good morrow to you, Miss, said he, coming up to me, I am told that you are going to marry the Baron de Sercour, and am come to pay my respects to my aunt before hand. I blushed at this discourse, as if I had something to reproach myself with on his account. I don't know who told you so, returned I, but you have not been misinformed ; I assure you, when I promised the Baron, I did not know that you were his nephew, and I am only sorry that it will deprive you of an estate, which I never had the least thoughts of taking from you. Since I must lose it, returned he, with a forced smile, I had rather you should have it than any body else. Mr. Villot, who was in another walk, seeing the abbé, came up to us to pay him his respects, which broke off our conversation ; when he left me with an affected air of tranquility. He now came to see me very often, but desired me not to tell any one, that he knew of our intended marriage ; so that I concealed it from his uncle, as well as Mrs. de St. Hermieres. The baron soon heard of his frequent visits, and asked me the reason of them ; but as I was entirely ignorant of his designs, I told him that I knew of no reason for his seeing me, unless it was because Mr. Villot's was in the way to Mrs. de-St. Hermieres's, whom he visited oftner than usual. When he went to this lady's, he behaved in a manner that quite surprized her ; he told her that the greatest difficulty he lay under in the ecclesiastical state, was to conquer a violent passion which she inspired, and that as he was now discharged from his sacred office, she might do him the favour to accept of both his heart and person ; this he said with an

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apparent

apparent confusion, and with eyes fixed on the floor; as she then thought him too young for her, she made no scruple of telling his discourse to me; but she soon after changed her resolution: for tho' she thought him too young for a husband, yet he was not too young to be agreeable to her.

THE baron received a letter from my mother with her consent, with another to me, and Mrs. de St. Hermieres; when our marriage was stopped by a long and dangerous illness, from which it was above two months before I was perfectly recovered. The abbé all this while appeared extremely uneasy at my condition, and came every day to know how I did. So that the baron, who had heard him say he would be married, as soon as he could fix his affections, imagined he had a design upon me, and asked me if it was not true. No, Sir, returned I, your nephew has never mentioned any thing to me on this subject, and seems to interest himself in my health, purely out of sentiments of esteem and friendship; and these were indeed my thoughts.

AT last I recovered, but was very much surprized to find that Mrs. de St. Hermieres did not join with the baron, in soliciting me to fix the day of our marriage. The day before that which was pitched upon for uniting me to the baron, she desired me to come and pass it at her house, and lie there. In the morning she called me aside; My dear, said she, I can't help pitying you, and am sorry to see you so dull, open your heart to me, there is a possibility of your yet going back. I will engage to excuse you to your mamma, and the abbé shall speak to his uncle, for I would not have you make a sacrifice of your self. Alas! Madam, I have only conformed myself to your advice,

advice, and it is too late now to recede ; my mother, who does not love me, would not be so tractable as you imagine. Let us say no more of that, said she, with an air more peevish than compassionate. Here the abbé entered, and addressing himself to Mrs. de St. Hermieres, I am told, Madam, said he, you are to have company here to night ; is Mrs. de Clarville to be one of your guests ? She promised me that she would, returned she, but I am afraid she will forget : however to prevent it, I will send her a short note. Miss, added she, I yesterday hurt my hand, and can hardly hold the pen ; will you write it for me ? Yes, Madam, replied I, with all my heart, you need but tell me what you would have me say. A word will do, returned she ; say,

MADAM,

YOU know I expect you to night, pray don't disappoint me.

WILL you sign it, Madam, said I, as soon as I had done. No, child, she replied, there is no need of that, she will know what it means. She then took the paper, and desired the abbé to ring the bell ; then recollecting herself, No, you need not, Sir, said she, as you don't stay supper, I think you had better go before the baron comes, and then you may do me the favour to give it her yourself, it won't be a step out of your way. Pray give it me then, Madam, returned he, and I will execute your commission directly ; at this he arose and left us. Scarce was he gone, when the baron entered. We supped very late, and Mrs. de Clarville, whom I had never seen, did not come, nor did that lady mention her any more. Supper was but just over when the clock struck eleven,

eleven. Mrs. de St. Hermieres put me in mind, that considering I was but upon the recovery, it was time for me to go to bed, especially as I was to rise at five o'clock in the morning ; on which I immediately took leave of the company. But I observed as Mrs. de St. Hermieres embraced me, she seemed confused and turned pale. One of her maids attended me to my room, in order to undress me, but I sent her away, because I was not disposed to go to bed. As I did not find myself inclined to sleep, I sat down in an easy chair, in a kind of reverie, where I forgot myself for above an hour ; after which being more awake than at first, I cast my eyes upon some books in a glass-case, and arose to take one, that I might try if reading a little would not make me drowsy. I read for about half an hour, and just as I began to grow weary, had thrown the book on the table, and was going to undress me, in order to go to bed ; I heard a noise in a small closet which opened into my chamber, the door of which was but little more than half shut. The noise continued, I began to be terrified, and cried out, Who is there ? Don't be afraid, Miss, said a voice, which I thought I knew notwithstanding my surprise, and immediately appeared the abbé, who with a smiling air came out of the closet. I remained some time with my eyes fixed and staring upon him, without being able to speak. Lord ! what do you do here, Sir ? cried I at last, hardly able to recover myself ; who brought you here ? Fear nothing, said he, impudently sitting down by me, I assure you I am here purely for the sake of being here. Ah ! what do you do here ? pursued I, raising my voice, get you gone immediately, added I, rising to open the door, but I found it fast, for the maid had locked it, and taken away

away the key. I then began to be full of rage and despair, and ran to the window to open it, and call out. No, no, I shall retire in a moment down the back stairs, cried he, holding me by my arm; believe me every body are in bed and asleep, and if you awake them, they will believe I have made use of this silent hour of night, and have not let slip such an opportunity; especially as I am here by your consent. By my consent, villain! here by my consent! Yes, said he, and here is a proof of it, read your own note, added he, shewing me that which Mrs. de St. Hermieres had desired me to write for her, with the word MADAM tore off. Oh thou wretch, thou abominable villain, oh, what a horrid monster! cried I, falling into my easy chair; O my God! ——— My surprise and tears here stopped my voice, and I was in an agony that nearly resembled madness. He saw my condition without being moved, and with all the calmness of the most hardened villain. I was sometimes tempted to cast myself upon him, and endeavour to tear him in pieces, but my weakness restrained me, and then suddenly seized by another emotion, I threw myself at his feet, Oh! Sir, cried I, why will you ruin me? what have I done to you? remember your own character ——— remember the service I have done you ——— I have not divulged your secret, and will never do it as long as I live. He then raised me up with the same coolness. Tho' you should not hold your tongue, no body will believe you, returned he, it would only be looked upon as the effect of your jealousy; it is not now in your power to hurt me: come, be calm, every thing will be over by and by, I am only doing you a piece of service, by delivering you from a marriage which you yourself are not pleased with, and

and which was going to ruin me ; that is all. While he was speaking, I heard the noise of several persons, my door suddenly burst open, and the first object which struck my eyes, was the Baron de Sercour, with his drawn sword in his hand, accompanied by Mrs. de St. Hermieres, a gentleman who supped with us, and two or three of the domestics, all armed.

THE baron and his friend had lain at the castle, where Mrs. de St. Hermieres had detained them under a pretence that they might be near the church, where they were to go very early in the morning. This lady had caused them both to be awakened, and sent word that the servants had disturbed her, and told her that they heard the noise of different voices in my chamber ; that indeed I did not cry out, but that she presumed I either durst not, or that I was hindered from doing it, and that to all appearance there were thieves in my room, and therefore entreated them for my sake as well as her's, to fly to my assistance with her servants. This was the reason why they all came in arms.

THE abbé, who knew what would happen, had just set me in the chair, and when they appeared had seated himself by me, with one of my hands in his ; I turned my head towards them with an air of consternation, and my face bathed in tears. As soon as I saw them, I gave a loud shriek, which they might reasonably attribute to the confusion I was in at being surprized with the abbé : my tears were an additional presumption against me ; for from whence could they proceed, since I had not called out for help, but from the affliction of a fond woman, ready to be separated from him she loves. The abbé I remember rose with a countenance which had an air of guilt and
shame.

shame. How! you, Miss! cried the baron lifting up his hands and eyes with a gesture expressive of the greatest consternation; You! whom I have thought so virtuous! Ah, whom can we trust to? It was impossible for me to make any reply, since I was almost suffocated with my sighs. Pardon me, Sir, the confusion I give you, said the abbé, in a suppliant tone, it is but two or three days since I was informed of the interest you had in this lady and the necessity she is under of marrying you. In the trouble into which this marriage cast her, she desired to see me once more; I yielded to her tender entreaties, to her grief, to this note, added he, shewing him the contents of it. In short, Sir, she wept, she weeps still; she is lovely, and I am but a man.——How! that note! cried I, and then stopped. I was unable to say any more, but immediately fainted. The abbé now slipped away, and the baron de Sercour, I was afterwards told, was so disordered, that he was obliged to be carried out of the room, and no sooner recovered a little but insisted upon going home. For my part, I came to myself thro' the assistance of the abbé's accomplice, the perfidious Mrs. de St. Hermieres, who retired as soon as I opened my eyes. In vain I desired to speak with her, she would not return, but left me with her women. I was instantly seized with a violent fever, and at six o'clock was sent back to Mr. Villot's, with a mind much more disordered than my body.

You will easily judge, Miss, that this adventure must be soon blazed abroad, which indeed it was in the most cruel manner; and to say all in one word, it entirely ruined my reputation. The baron and Mrs. de St. Hermieres, wrote to my mother about it, and sent back her consent. And a few days after that lady pleaded so effectually
for

for the abbé, that she made a perfect reconciliation between him and his uncle. The baron, who really loved me, aspersed me with such an air of christianity, and lamented my seeming baseness in terms so interesting, so severe, and yet so pious, that nobody could hear him without being affected. I remained near three months struggling with death, disgraced and ruined in the opinion of the world, and without any other resource, than the charity of my constant friends, the honest Mr. Villot and his wife, who assisted me with all imaginable care, notwithstanding the indignation of my mother, who sent them word that she should entirely abandon and disown me. These good people were all that ever opposed the torrent of reproach, into which I was fallen; not that they thought me entirely innocent, tho' they could not be persuaded to believe I was so culpable, as the world was ill-natured enough to imagine. At last my fever began to abate, and I no sooner found myself in a condition to discourse, than my first care was to relate to them all I knew of this unhappy event, and the reasons I had to suspect that Mrs. de St. Hermieres was an accomplice in the abbé's crime. They regarded him as a saint, and therefore I thought it my duty to unmask him, by trusting them, under an oath of secrecy, with his adventure with the nun. This sufficiently undeceived them, and removed the least suspicion of my guilt; and from that instant they never ceased to vindicate my innocence, and maintain with the utmost courage, that the public did not do me justice; but they were only laughed at, and all they could say signified nothing. As soon as I could venture abroad, I endeavoured to vindicate myself; but every body shunned me, and all my companions were forbid to come near me. I then confined myself to my room, and

continually bathed in tears, implored the assistance of heaven to clear up my innocence; and my prayers at last were heard. One of Mrs de St. Hermieres women's, who was married and ready to lie in, being in danger of her life, thought herself obliged to reveal the secret, and therefore said in the presence of several witnesses, that the abbé had made her a present of a fine ring, to engage her to convey him into a closet in my chamber, while they were at supper, and between twelve and one to tell Mrs. de St. Hermieres, that she heard a noise in my room. I at first, said she, refused to do it except Miss de Terviere should approve of it; he then begged me to keep it secret, and told me that his design was only to break off her marriage with his uncle, by which he should lose his estate; and further presented me with a note for three thousand livres, which I was to receive as soon as the baron was dead. The note and the ring, said she, corrupted me; I introduced him into the closet, and the marriage was not only broken off, but the young lady's reputation lost: this is all the reparation I can make her, and I beg you will vindicate her to the world, and intreat her pardon for me.

THIS, my dear Marianne, might have been a sufficient testimony of my innocence! for the persons who heard her make this declaration, did me the justice to repeat it where ever they went. But this was not all. Mrs. de St. Hermieres going to pay a visit to one of her friends, her coach was overturned into a deep ditch, from which she was taken much bruised and speechless. This accident threw her into such a violent fever, that her life was despaired of. In this extremity she sent for Mr. Villot, and in the presence of a number of witnesses, delivered to him a paper sealed up and written

written by her own hand, charging him to open it as soon as he got home, and publish it to the world. He made haste to discharge his commission, and we broke it open with as much curiosity as surprize, and this in a few words was the substance of it.

“ BEING ready to appear before him to whom
 “ I must give an account of all my actions, I
 “ hereby declare to the baron of Sercour, that he
 “ ought not to impute to Miss de Terviere any
 “ part of the adventure which broke off his marriage with her. It was I and another person,
 “ who contrived the story of her having an inclination for his nephew; and what happened in
 “ her room was a plot concerted between that
 “ other person and myself, in order to make a
 “ breach between her and the baron. I die with
 “ a heart full of the most perfect esteem for the
 “ virtue of Miss de Terviere, to whom I consented to do an injury, from an apprehension
 “ of the wrong which the said other person
 “ threatned to do me if I refused to be his accomplice.

“ A. DE ST. HERMIERES.”

IT is impossible to express the joy, the satisfaction and delight this writing gave me; you must judge of it by that excess of misery, under which I had so long languished. Mr. Villot went immediately to shew this paper every where, and began with the baron de Sercour, who instantly came to pay me a visit, and make his apology. Every body began now to load me with the testimonies of their esteem and friendship: all, who knew my mother, wrote to her on this happy subject, while the

abbé was not only contemned by his uncle, but became an object of public abhorrence, and was obliged to leave that part of the country, and hide himself in a town at some distance, where we heard about two years after, that his ill conduct and debts had brought him to a jail in which he ended his days. Mrs. de St. Hermieres's chambermaid recovered, and that lady herself survived that note which had cleared me so completely, and retired to a remote country seat of her's, where she lived when I left the country. The baron de Sercour, whom I used with the utmost politeness, endeavoured to renew his friendship with me, and even proposed to conclude our marriage; but he had used me too ungenerously for me ever to take such a resolution.

I WAS now about eighteen years old, when Mrs. Durfan, an elderly widow lady, who was sister to Mr. de Terviere my grandfather, returned to this part of the country, which she had left for above fifty years, that she might see again her family, and end her days amongst her relations. She had a son to whom she had given a very liberal education, but having sent him to St. Malo's to transact some business for her, he fell in love with a young woman of great beauty; but of a poor and even infamous family, tho' her character was not stained with their vices; Mrs. Durfan no sooner heard of his design to marry this girl, than she flew into a rage, and let him know that he could have nothing to expect from her but resentment if he persisted in his design, which she thought to the last degree base and detestable. Her son, finding that she was not to be prevailed upon, no longer thought of what he should lose by indulging his passion, but coolly resolved upon his own ruin. He found means to rob the old lady of twenty thousand

thousand livres, went to his mistress, imposed upon her by a forged consent of his mother's, whose hand he counterfeited, and had just time to marry her before the old lady, who too late found out the robbery, could think of preventing it, and obliged her to run away with him to avoid being pursued, after having confessed that he had deceived her. Three or four years after this, he wrote two or three letters to Mrs. Dursan, who in answer to the sorrow he expressed for his crime, let him know that he had behaved too ill ever to expect forgiveness, and that she would never see him more. So that she had not now heard from him for above seventeen years. Mr. de Terviere, my uncle, being acquainted with this affair, went to wait upon the old lady, to endeavour to cultivate a friendship with her, that he might be substituted in the room of her son, as he had been in that of my father; but he had to deal with a woman who had penetration enough to see through his designs; and she was shocked at his ridiculous behaviour. However she bought his castle with the estate that belonged to it, which he was glad to dispose of, as he usually resided at his wife's estate in Burgundy. Mr. Villot carried me thither, to see this lady. She was pleased with my company, and soon began to love me, and was delighted to find that I had a sincere affection for her. He, intending to leave me with her only for a few days, came to fetch me away; but Mrs. Dursan was not disposed to part with me. My dear, said she, taking me aside, art thou weary of this house? No, aunt, said I, but I am weary of being any where else. Well then, thou shalt stay with me, returned she, I think thou wilt be more respected here than at Villot's. I think so too, Madam, replied I smiling. Well then I will write to thy mother

mother to-morrow, added she, to let her know that I will take thee under my care ; between thee and I, Mr. Villot's is not a house suitable to thy birth. Miss de Terviere a boarder at a farmer's, a very pretty thing indeed ! It is much better than being boarder at a vine-dresser's, as I once thought I should have been, replied I. It is so, said she, I heard thy history yesterday, and am sensible how much thou art obliged to honest Villot and his wife. But not to mention thy mother, what a pretty couple of aunts thou hast got ! what relations !

WHILE we were talking thus, Mr. Villot entered the room. Come, Sir, said Mrs. Durfan, we were just talking of you ; you are come for Miss de Terviere ; but suppose I should not be willing to part with her, you will resign her to me, won't you ? how much is due for her board ? You need not be in haste about that, replied he ; as to your young mistress, it is fit you should have her, since you desire it, but yet I shall return home very dull, at the thoughts of having lost her ; we shall think the house looks very strange without her, for we love her as well as our own child, and shall never love her less, added he, with the tears standing in his eyes. Nor does your child, said I, return your affection with a less degree of tenderness. But, Sir, cried Mrs. Durfan, with a look that shewed she was charmed at his reluctance to part with me, you need not disturb yourself, you are not going to lose my cousin entirely, for you may come and see her as often as you please. My wife and I will gladly make use of this permission, said he, with a low bow. I then embraced him without ceremony, desired him to give my sincere love to Mrs. Villot, and promised to go to see her the next day. After which he left me.

I NOW lived in that castle, which would have been my father's, had Mr. de Terviere my grandfather lived long enough to have altered his will. Every thing here, for upwards of five years, conspired to make me pleased with my situation; the beauty, with which they now flattered me, gained me abundance of admirers, and I soon became the reigning toast of that part of the country, while my behaviour made me universally beloved, and gained me a great many friends. Mrs. Dursan, whom I loved with the most sincere affection, listened to the praises which she frequently heard bestowed upon me, with an eagerness which expressed the greatness of her affection; she summed up these commendations, and from thence inferred that she had reason to love and admire me, and give me the tenderest place in her heart. But this good lady, who had hitherto appeared in perfect health, began now to experience the decays of nature; her vivacity and activity forsook her, and all the infirmities of old age came on apace and filled me with apprehensions that I should soon lose her. I could not think of her dying, without the greatest uneasiness. Yet I resolved not to fright her, by discovering my concern, and therefore endeavoured to counterfeit my usual gaiety and cheerfulness. But we laugh with a very ill grace, in cases like this, and wretchedly mimic the reverse of what we feel. I could not deceive Mrs. Dursan; she saw the situation of my heart, and smiled most tenderly when she looked at me, to thank me for the struggles she saw I was in with myself.

ONE day as I entered her room, I asked her with an affected vivacity, how she did? I am better, child, to-day, said she, but we are not immortal; I have been a great while in the world,

added

added she, sealing a packet. Pray, who do you write to, Madam, cried I? To nobody, my dear, returned she, I have only been taking some proper measures for thee. I have no child; it is now above twenty years since I heard from my son, so that I fancy he is dead; but tho' he should be alive, it would be the same thing to me; not that I have any resentment against him now, may God bless him, and make him an honest man; but neither the honour of my family, religion, nor good manners, which he has equally violated, will permit me to leave him my estate. Here I interrupted her, to endeavour to soften her in favour of her unhappy son, but she would not even hear what I had to say for him. Hold thy tongue, said she, it is not a fit of ill-humour, that renders me so inflexible: the question is not whether I should be kind to him; but whether being so would not be a weak and criminal indulgence, that would break in upon all order, and be a breach of justice, both human and divine. This silly wretch has had no regard to any thing, and yet thou wouldst have me set such an example of impunity, as might prove fatal to thy son, if thou shouldst ever have one. Had he married as thy father did, I will not say a girl of a noble extraction, but one of a good, or barely an honest family, tho' ever so poor, I should have been reconciled long ago; but for my son not only to marry one of the meanest birth, but of a family known to be infamous; one from among the dreggs of the people; I cannot think of it without horror. But to return to what I was saying, I have no other heir but thy uncle Terviere, who is already very rich, and possessed of thy estate too. I have been told he had the cruelty to take the advantage of thy father's misfortunes, without ever endeavour

ing by his assistance to alleviate them. He would rejoice at my son's baseness, and my grief for him. Tho' he has thy father's estate, he nevertheless shews no concern for thee; therefore I will not hear of him. Thou hast nothing to expect from thy barbarous mother, and deserveest a better situation, than thou wouldst be left in, and I shall only make the fortune of a niece, for whom I have a tender affection, who I know loves me in return, fears to lose me, and will I am sure regret my loss, tho' she is heir to my fortune. My son will not find thee without pity for him, in the misfortunes in which he is perhaps now involved. Thy gratitude is the resource I leave him. I could make no other answer to this discourse, but by bursting into a flood of tears. Methought she was going to expire, and this will seemed a sort of giving me an eternal adieu; never did she appear so dear to me as now. I sat down and gave a loose to my sorrow; she easily guessed at the subject of my grief, came to me, and taking me by the hand, Thou lovest me better than my estate, my dear, don't you? dry up thy tears, this is only a precaution which my years oblige me to take. I hope, Madam, said I, endeavouring to recover myself, your son is not dead, and I wish you may live to see him again.

WHILE we were in this discourse, we heard the voices of two ladies in the hall, who were come to pay us a visit, on which I ran into my room to prevent their seeing my disorder. However I was obliged to return in a little time to keep them company. When they told us, they had agreed to divert themselves the next day with fishing, and asked us to partake with them in their recreation; but as I could not have Mrs. Dursan's company, I found means to excuse myself, and the

tho' I endeavoured to conceal the motive, which made me unwilling to share in their amusements, by feigning an indisposition; my aunt easily saw that the only reason was, that I could not bear to leave her. Whatever disguises I put on to prevent her taking notice of my concern for her, she saw thro' them, and the daily discoveries she made of my excessive tenderness and regard for her, at last made her love me with all that affection, which is due from an indulgent mother to a fond and obedient daughter.

ONE day when the old lady was asleep, as I was walking with a book in my hand, in which I was reading, in a grove adjoining to the castle, I heard a noise at the end of an avenue leading to the house, and immediately went to see what was the matter. When I observed one of Mrs. Dursan's game-keepers, with one of his servants quarrelling with a young gentleman, and endeavouring to make him deliver a gun he had on his shoulder. I felt myself a little moved at the brutality and threatening tone in which they spoke to him, as well as at the violence they were about to use, and therefore made as much haste as I could to come up with them, calling to them at the same time to forbear. The nearer I approached them, the more their behaviour displeased me, because I could better perceive the young man, whom indeed it was difficult to look upon with indifference; his air, his shape, and countenance struck me, tho' he appeared in a plain and thread-bare suit. What are you about there, cried I? in an angry tone, when I got pretty near them. We have stopped this boy here, who has killed some game upon my lady's lands, and are going to take his gun from him, said the keeper, with all the confidence of a man who is proud of his authority, and glad of an

opportunity to exert it. The young man pulled off his hat in a very respectful manner, as soon as I came near, and from time to time cast upon me a modest and submissive look while the other was speaking. Let him alone, let the gentleman go, said I to the game-keeper, who had hitherto called him only boy, whose incivility I was willing to atone for. Go about your business, added I, he is without doubt a stranger, and knew not upon what ground he might or might not divert himself. I did but cross these fields, Madam, said he with a low bow, in my way to another place, and they are mistaken if they think I have shot any thing on their mistress's ground; but they are more in the wrong to pretend to disarm a man they don't know, and who, notwithstanding the ill appearance I make, am not born to be treated thus by men of their station. On this the game-keeper and his comrade insisted that he deserved no favour, and continued giving him opprobrious language; but I imposed silence upon them with indignation; at my first coming, I had only found them brutish, but now they began to use him with intollerable insolence. Hold your tongue, cried I to them, you talk nonsense; retire a little but don't go away. And then addressing myself to the young gentleman, I asked if they had taken any game from him. No, Miss, said he, I can't sufficiently thank you for the protection you have been pleased to grant me on this occasion. I have been seeking some game, it is true, but from a motive which will appear to you very pardonable; it is for a gentleman, who has several relations amongst the nobility of this country; he has been many years distant from it, and returned to it the day before yesterday with my mother. In short, Miss, it is for my father. — I left him sick, or at least very much indisposed,

disposed, at the house of a peasant, where we have retired; and you will judge, that he can be but ill accommodated there, as he is not in a condition that will suffer him to be at much expence in purchasing what is fit for him. I came out this morning to sell a little jewel I have in my pocket, and took my fowling-piece in my hand, that I might, as I returned back, catch something which my father might eat with less disgust, than what they have given him hitherto.

You are sensible, Marianne, what a mortifying discourse this must be to the young gentleman, yet there was not a single word in it, which did not excite my regard as much as my sensibility; and which did not force me to distinguish the man from his misfortunes; nothing could be more opposite than his person and indigence. I am sorry, Sir, said I, that I did not come soon enough to prevent what has past. You may shoot here as often as you please, and I will take care that nobody shall hinder you; here is plenty of game, and you won't go far before you find what you want for your father; but may I see the jewel which you intend to sell! Alas! Madam, returned he, it is but a trifle; it is worth but about two hundred livres; but that may be sufficient to support my father till his affairs take a better turn. Here it is, added he, giving it me. If you please to come again to morrow morning, said I, after having taken the ring and looked at, perhaps I may have found one willing to buy it. I will shew it to the lady of this castle, who is my aunt, she is generous, and I will tell her the reason that induces you to sell it; it will infallibly move her, and I hope she will spare you the trouble of carrying it to the town, where I foresee you will find but few people who will care

to buy it. This I said as I was giving him back the ring; but he desired me to keep it. There is no need of that, Miss, said he; since you will be so good as to try what you can do for us, I will return to-morrow; besides it is fit the lady you speak of, should have time to examine it; therefore permit me to leave it with you. I was surprised at the sudden frankness of this proposition, which pleased me, and made me blush without knowing why. However I refused at first to keep the ring, and pressed him to take it back. No, Miss, said he, bowing, it is much better that you should have it, that you may be able to show it, and on this he left me. I stood still to look after him till he had got out of sight; I beheld him with pity; I wished him well; saw him with pleasure, and thought that in this I was only generous.

The game-keeper and his comrade waited in a walk thirty or forty steps from us, as I had ordered them, and I then went back to them. If you should meet again this young gentleman, said I, I forbid your troubling him any more, and I shall take care that Mrs. Dursan herself shall forbid it too. I then went into the castle, with my mind full of this lovely youth, and charmed with his modest, his respectful and polite behaviour, even the ring took up some part of my attention; but I did not consider it as an indifferent thing. As Mrs. Dursan was now awake, I told her my little adventure, and she did not fail to approve all I had done; and this gave me such hopes, that I immediately shewed her the ring, and told her what I had promised, not doubting but I should meet with success, and have the money for it directly; but I was quite mistaken, my aunt and I were not affected in the same manner: she was

only good and charitable ; a disposition that does not usually prompt people, to buy a thing they have no manner of need of. Why, sure thou wast dreaming, said she, what should I do with the ring ? I could buy it for nobody but thee, and I have given thee much finer ones. No, child, take it back again, returned she, giving it me with a melancholy and thoughtful air, take it out of my sight, it makes me call to mind, a small diamond I had formerly, which I gave to my son, as soon as he had finished his studies ; it is so like it that one would think it the same. At this I took it again, wrapped it up in the paper I had taken it out of, and assured her she should never see it any more. Stay, returned she, I think it would be proper thou shouldst lend the young man a little money, which he may pay thee again when he has sold his jewel. There is ten crowns for him, I don't much care whether he returns it or no ; I will give it him, but don't tell him so. Indeed I won't, Madam replied I, taking this small sum, which fell far short of what my generosity would have excited me to have done for him, which however joined to what I proposed to add to it, would become a little more worthy of his acceptance ; for Mrs. Dursan, who would have me play upon occasion, never suffered me to want money in my pocket. All my concern was to know how to offer this sum to the young gentleman, without making him blush at the indigence of his family ; or suspect that this loan was designed as a gift.

THE next day as I was walking on the terrass of the garden, with Mrs. Dursan, I was told that a stranger wanted to speak with me. I guessed who it was, and went to him with a secret emotion, and received him with an air we generally assume,

when we come to tell persons we have not succeeded in our attempts for them; I told him I was very sorry that I could not persuade my aunt to buy his ring; she having so many already, that she could not tell what to do with it; but however she would be glad to serve him and his family, and as a proof of it would lend him a small sum, till their affairs would make it convenient for them to return it. He seemed agreeably surprized, and with a grateful smile told me, he was at a loss to know what he ought most to thank us for, the service we were willing to do his family, or the care I took to disguise the nature of the obligation. My father and mother will feel as much gratitude for your kindness as myself, said he; but I am come to tell you, Miss, that our uneasiness is over, and that yesterday we found a lady, who has been so kind as to lend us all we wanted. Mrs. Durfan, who then entered the hall, prevented me from making him any reply. Is not this the gentleman that trusted you with the ring you shewed me, niece? said she. Yes, Madam, replied I, but the gentleman will not sell it now. I am glad to hear it, said she, but though I have not bought it, can I be of no service to you, Sir, added she, addressing herself to him? Your parents, my niece informs me, are just arrived in this country, and I should be glad of an opportunity to serve them. I could hardly forbear embracing my aunt, I was so pleased with this declaration. I shall let my father and mother know the obliging manner in which you interest yourself in our affairs, returned he, and meanwhile I entreat you, Madam, to continue in this favourable disposition towards us. He had no sooner pronounced these words, than Mrs. Durfan seemed astonished, and stood for some time silent. When recovering herself, Is
your

your father sick still? said she. He is better than he was yesterday, replied he. But pray, Sir, cried she again, what is the nature of those affairs which bring him hither? He is come to accommodate some family concerns, Madam, returned he in a timorous tone, which he will acquaint you with himself, when he has the honour to see you; but there are some reasons which will not permit him to shew himself so soon. Well, said she, taking hold of my arm, to help her to go, I have friends in this country, and it will not be my fault, if I am not of service to you. She then left him, and contrary to my inclination obliged me to wait on her; for methought I had still many things to say to him, and he on his part seemed not to have disclosed all his mind to me, and I could easily perceive he was sorry to part from me so soon. This young man, said Mrs. Dursan, has a most engaging mien, and I am persuaded he must belong to persons of fashion. His voice gave me a strange emotion; I could not help fancying I heard my sort speak. Some body here interrupted our conversation, when I went into my room in a deep study, while this amiable person took up all my thoughts. I longed to see him again, but waited two days in vain, tho' not without a great deal of impatience. The second day, one of Mrs. Dursan's most intimate friends came to pay her a visit at about four in the afternoon, and as I was, out of complaisance, waiting upon her back to her coach, which she had ordered to stop at the great walk which leads to the castle; Let us take a turn this way for a few minutes, said she, turning towards a little wood which surrounded the house, and which had been cut through to make this avenue; there are some persons who wait for us there, said she, who durst not follow me to your house, and whom

I fain would shew you. I smiled at this ; May I trust myself with you, Madam, said I in jest, has nobody an intention to run away with me. No, returned she, in the same tone, I won't take you far. And indeed we had hardly got into the midst of the wood, before we saw, about ten paces from us, three persons who approached us with great respect and civility, one of whom I at once knew to be the young man I have mentioned ; the other was a genteel woman of about forty years old, who seemed to have been a perfect beauty, and had still a most engaging appearance, tho' her pale and melancholy countenance, shewed she had been long involved in distress, and been familiar with sorrow. She was dressed in an old gown, which had only the marks of having once been fine. The other was a man between forty and fifty years old, of a very sickly look, and was so ill dressed that he had no marks of his dignity but his sword. It was he that came up to us first with a respectful bow, which I returned, full of curiosity to know what this scene would produce ; Sir, said I, to the youth who stood by him, pray tell me who I am now with. It is my father and mother, Miss, that you see here, returned he, and not to keep you any longer in suspense, you are with Mr. and Mrs. Durfan. 'Tis true, my dear, said the lady that brought me, this is your cousin, the son of that aunt who has given you all her estate, as she has told me herself, and I must now beg your pardon ; for, sensible of your great soul, I know that in bringing you hither, I have done you the worst office in the world.

SCARCE had she uttered these words when Mrs. Durfan threw herself at my feet. It is I that have been the cause of my husband's misfortunes, and therefore I ought to prostrate myself before you, and to entreat you to pity him and his son, cried she,

she, taking hold of my hand, which she bathed with her tears: whilst she was speaking both the father and son, with their eyes full, waited for my answer in the most supplicating posture. Dear, Madam, what do you do there? cried I, embracing her, and penetrated even to the bottom of my soul, at seeing this unfortunate family around me, making me the arbitrator of their fate, and soliciting me with trembling hands to pity their misery. What are you doing, Madam? cried I again; arise, you have not a better friend than I am. Is it necessary thus to humble yourselves before me, to touch my heart?—Can your estate be mine whilst you live? I have not received that gift without pain, and shall give it up to you with a thousand times more pleasure than it could ever have given me in the possession. At the same time, I offered my hand to the father and son, who took hold of it with such a tender timidity, as made me blush, notwithstanding the confusion I was in at this moving spectacle. In fine the mother whom I had held hitherto with my arm about her neck, arose at last and left me at liberty. When I embraced Mr. Durfan, who could only thank me by a great many incoherent words, without concluding one sentence. After having left the father, I cast my eyes on the son. He was my relation, and in these circumstances, nothing ought to have hindered me, from giving him the same testimonies of my friendship as I had given Mr. Durfan; but his relation to me was something different. I did not find my tenderness for him so noble; there had passed between us I don't know what, something so sweet, so tender, as to hinder me from treating him with the same freedom; and which even seemed to awe him. But why, thought I, after a moment's reflection, should I treat him

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with more reserve than the others? what will they think of it? I then came to a resolution, and embraced him with an emotion which was equal to his.

LET us first see what you would have me do, said I, to Mr. and Mrs. Durfan? my aunt has a very good affection for me, and you may depend upon the ascendant this will give me over her. I must repeat it again, that the will she has made in my favour shall stand for nothing, and I will tell her so whenever you please. But we must take some measures ere you appear before her, added I, addressing myself to the father. Don't you think it proper, said the lady who brought me here, that I should prepare her to receive her son, and let her know that he is here? No, returned I, in a pensive tone, I know she is inflexible with regard to Mr. Durfan, and therefore that cannot be the way to succeed. Alas! Miss, cried the old gentleman, it would be only granting a pardon to a dying man; I shall soon be no more; it is not for myself, that I implore her mercy; it is for my wife; it is for my son, whom I shall leave in the most wretched indigence. Why do you talk of indigence! pray banish this thought from your mind, replied I; you don't do me justice, I have already told you, and now repeat it again, that I will withhold from them nothing that is yours, and from this moment your condition ceases to depend on the success of your reconciliation with my aunt; unless upon my refusing to be her heir, she should make a new will in favour of another, which I can't see the least probability of. But hold, I have a thought just come into my mind. Your mother wants a chambermaid; she has lost one whom doubtless you have known, it is poor le Fevre, let us make use of this conjuncture, and endeavour to
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put Mrs. Durfan in her place. It is you, Madam, said I to the other lady, that must present her to my aunt, and give her a character; you must answer for her affection to her, and boldly affirm of her all the advantageous things that can be said on an occasion of this nature. This lady is amiable; the engaging sweetness of her countenance will give a sanction to all you can say of her, and her conduct will completely justify your encomiums. My aunt will soon love her, and thank you for having given her such a treasure; and she will be no longer able to resist, when in some happy moment she will give us an opportunity to discover the cheat. Besides no woman ought to blush at serving an offended mother-in-law, when it is only a stratagem to disarm her resentment.

I HAD no sooner made this proposal, than they all let me know they approved of it, by thanking me anew, and saying they were surprized at my generosity, zeal, and good-will to them. Tomorrow morning, said the lady, who was both their friend and mine, I will introduce Mrs. Durfan to her mother-in-law. She asked me to-day, if I knew of a discreet sensible person, that might supply le Fevre's place; I promised I would look out for one, and I now hire you for her, added she, smiling, to Mrs. Durfan, who was delighted with my contrivance. We then heard some servants at a small distance; when for fear of a discovery we agreed to part, and Mrs. du Frainville, (that was the lady's name that brought me hither) and I retired accordingly, and went to the end of the avenue to her coach, in which she waited to take my cousins to her house, while I returned home. The next morning about ten o'clock, Mrs. du Frainville came to see us again, and entered my aunt's room almost as soon as I; when after a little conver-

conversation, At last, Madam, said that lady, you have got another chambermaid ; and I assure you it is a very extraordinary one ; was it not for you, I would turn away mine, and keep her for myself, and I must needs love you very much, to give you the preference. She is a careful, ingenious, affectionate and virtuous woman ; and in short, I hardly think it possible for you to find her equal. Indeed ! cried my aunt, with some surprize ; pray what service is she leaving ? how could any body part with such an excellent servant ? Is her mistress dead ? That is the case, returned Mrs. du Frainville, who had foreseen the question ; her lady died a few days ago, with whom she lived many years, besides she belongs to a very worthy family, for whom I have a great esteem. Well, Madam, when will you send her to me ? said my aunt. This minute, replied Mrs. du Frainville ; I left her but on the terrass of your garden. How great soever her merit and good sense is, I was not willing she should be present to hear the encomiums I have given her. She don't know her worth so well as I do ; nor is it necessary that she should ; you need only send one of your servants for her. No, no, said I, I will go myself, and went immediately. I fancied she must be uneasy, and that she stood in need of encouragement. Come, Madam, cried I, as I came up to her, you are accepted ; my aunt admits you into your own house, tho' she thinks she only receives you into her's. Alas ! Miss, I tremble all over, and am afraid of shewing myself in the confusion I am in, replied she, in a tone which was but too great a proof of what she said. Pray, why do you tremble, said I to her ? is it because you are going to appear before one of the best women in the world, to whom you will soon be very dear, and who perhaps in a fortnight's time,

may

may tenderly embrace you, and thank you for this deceit you put upon her? Come, Madam, you have no reason to be troubled; what have you to fear? you are sure of Mrs. du Franville, and I hope of me too. Of you! Miss! returned she, you make me blush; who should I depend upon if not on you? Come, I am ready to follow you, my confusion is almost dissipated. On this we went into the room she had been so much afraid of; however in spite of all her courage, she appeared with an excessive timorousness; but which joined to her amiable and modest countenance, was only to her an additional charm. For my part, I smiled with an air of satisfaction, in order to excite the same disposition in my aunt, who looked at me to see if I liked her. You are to stay here, Mrs. Brunon, said Mrs. du Frainville, this lady accepts of you, and I can't give you a greater proof of my friendship, than in placing you with her; I have assured her, that she will be well satisfied with you, and am not afraid of having imposed upon her. I dare not answer for any thing, but my zeal, and utmost endeavours to please the lady, replied the fictitious Brunon, with a most engaging air. My aunt seemed at once prejudiced in her favour; I believe, said she, to Mrs. du Frainville, I may thank you beforehand for my chambermaid; and I am much mistaken, if I shall not end my life with her; I shall make no agreement with you, Brunon, added she, you may trust to my generosity, and I am persuaded we shall be well satisfied with each other. You are to lie in a room adjoining to mine, and I will order one of my women to shew it to you. No, no, aunt, said I, as she was going to ring the bell, you need not call any body, I am going to my room, and will shew her her's. As I left my aunt, we heard her say to Mrs. du Frainville,

ville, this woman has been as beautiful as an angel; at this I looked at Brunon, Don't you think, said I, smiling, this short discourse is a pretty good omen? her son is half justified already. Yes, Miss, replied she, squeezing my hand, it is a good beginning, and heaven seems to bless the part you have made me take. We staid some time together; for I went out of the room, to acquaint her with a great many minute things which I desired her not to neglect, and which I knew would exceedingly please my aunt. She listened to me quite transported with gratitude, and it was impossible to express a more lively sense of an obligation, than she then did. Her heart seemed every minute to swell with new transports of joy, which she always concluded with the most affectionate caresses. In a week's time my aunt seemed perfectly charmed with her behaviour, and let me know that if she continued the same, she would be very bountiful to her, which, she said, she knew I would not be sorry for. I entreat you to be so, said I; you have a mind too good, too generous, not to recompense her zeal and attachment to you; for I can see she loves you, and her service is accompanied with a sincere tenderness for your person. Thou art in the right, returned she, I think so too; but I wonder that her virtue, and beauty did not when she was young, turn the brains of some young gentleman, and force him to marry her; for she has actually one of those mischievous faces, which are apt to cause the utmost disturbance in a family. 'Tis true, Madam, replied I, she must certainly have spent her life in a very obscure retirement, and I fancy my cousin Dursan must have had the misfortune to meet with just such a person, added I, with a simple undesigning air; but in the country where Brunon lived, a girl tho' ever so charming

charming is buried alive. My aunt shrugged up her shoulder at this discourse, and made me no answer. I had seen Mr. Dursan and his son several times in the wood as before, but the last time I found the father so sick, with such a livid and bloated countenance, and with eyes so dead, that I immediately thought he would not be able to return, and I was not deceived. Dear cousin, said he to me, I find myself dying. Mrs. du Frainville, since I have been at her house, has procured me a physician and all the assistance that lay in her power, but it was too late, my illness has increased ever since, therefore I came to-day for the last time to recommend to you the interest of my unfortunate family. I endeavoured to comfort him, by giving him fresh assurances of my zeal and affection, and by relating the happy situation his affairs were in by his wife's having such a share of the old lady's esteem and friendship, and therefore entreated him to be easy, because his misfortunes might possibly be over that very night. As I could not stay he rose up to testify his thankfulness, and bid me adieu; but whether the subject of our conversation had exhausted his spirits, or whether he was too much fatigued by walking from Mrs. du Frainville's coach to that part of the wood, he was seized with a stoppage of his breath, and fell down again upon the place where he had sat, and where we thought he would have expired.

His wife who was coming to us heard the cries of her son, and ran to assist him, whilst I trembled to such a degree, that I could hardly support myself. As I had a smelling bottle in my pocket, I pulled it out and held it to his nose. At last he came a little to himself, but it was impossible for him to walk to the coach, or endure the jolting of it from thence to Mrs. du Franville's. His wife
and

and son, both as pale as death, looked at me with countenances which expressed the distraction of their minds, and asked me what they should do. There is no time to hesitate, cried I, he can be carried no where but to the castle, and while my aunt is with Mrs. du Frainville, I will fetch somebody to convey him thither. To the castle! cried his wife, Oh! Miss, then we are ruined. No, said I, don't disturb yourself, we have nothing to fear, I will take every thing upon myself. I then ran to the house and brought two men, who carried him into a little apartment on the ground floor, where I ordered him to be put to bed, fully persuaded that he had not long to live; and therefore as it was almost impossible to procure him either a physician or confessor unknown to Mrs. Durfan, and as I was afraid on the other hand, he would die without seeing her, I concluded that I must begin by acquainting her, that there was a sick person in the house. Sir, said I abruptly, to young Mr. Durfan, be so good as to come with me to my aunt. He followed me with the tears in his eyes, and in the way I acquainted him with what I was going to say. We found Mrs. du Frainville taking leave of my aunt, and they were both in the utmost surprise to see us enter the room together. This gentleman's father, said I to my aunt, is in the apartment below, where I have ordered him to be put to bed. He came with his son to thank you for the offers of service you have made him; but the fatigue of the way, together with a violent illness he has been in for several months, had so exhausted his spirits that we feared he would die in the court; I ran to his assistance, and have put him in that room where I left him with Brunon; and really, Madam, he is so ill that I fear he won't live till night. Dear, Sir, cried Mrs.

Mrs. du Frainville, is your father so ill as that? I am extremely sorry to hear it. She thought fit to imitate my discretion in concealing his name. Oh! Madam, added she, addressing himself to Mrs. Dursan, I am afflicted at this melancholy news. You know him then, Madam, cried my aunt. Yes, I know him and all his family; he is related on his mother's side to the best families in this country; he came to see me some days ago with his wife and son, when I offered them my house, and am even putting an end to the unhappy affair which brought him hither. He has a dropsy, Madam, and is besides overwhelmed with grief, and I implore all your goodness in his behalf. You can never bestow your favours better, nor on an object who has a greater claim to them. Permit me to leave you, for I must see him. Do, Madam, returned my aunt; let us go together; my niece shall lend me her arm.

I DID not think it proper, that she should see him yet, and considered that by deferring it a little longer, chance might present us with some more interesting circumstances, in which there might be less danger of success; for I feared so much precipitation might spoil our scheme, with a person of my aunt's penetration and inflexible temper, and give our proceedings too much the air of a plot; for she might have considered her son's illness, if he recovered, as a mere farce contrived to soften and work upon her; whereas a little delay might remove every suspicion of that kind. I had ordered a physician and priest to be sent for, and as I did not doubt but Mr. Dursan would receive the eucharist, I designed to introduce her in the midst of that awful ceremony; a moment that appeared much more to insure success than the present. I therefore persuaded her

her to stay a little longer, and told her I would take care that nothing should be wanting, which might be of service to Mrs. du Frainville's friend; and in the mean time would let her know how he did, and when he would be in a condition to speak to her. Mrs. du Frainville, who regulated her conduct by mine, was of the same opinion. Young Mr. Durfan joined with us, and begged of her not to leave the room, so that she let us go, after having said some obliging things to this young gentleman, who as he left her, kissed her hand in a most tender and respectful manner; an action that seemed to make some impression upon her. We found poor Brunon bathed in tears; and the physician, who was just come with the priest, assured us he had but a few hours to live. After confession, the priest told us that he desired him to entreat Mrs. Durfan to come to him, before he received the eucharist. Are you desired, Sir, said I, to tell my aunt who he is. No, Miss, said he, my commission extends no farther, than to desire her to come to him. The patient then called me with a weak voice, and I went to him. Dear cousin, said he, I beg that you and Mrs. du Frainville will second this gentleman's entreaties. We will, Sir, said I, and I think it would be proper that your wife, for whom she has a peculiar friendship, should accompany us, while your son stays here with you. We then went to the old lady: Madam, said the priest, with a most serious air, I am come to tell you, that the poor gentleman below desires to see you before he dies, that he may thank you for your kindness to him, and acquaint you with something that is of importance to you. Of importance to me! replied she with some surprise, what can he have to say to me, that I am concerned in? You have,

he says a son, returned the priest, whom he knew before he arrived in this country ; and it is of that son, he is desirous of speaking to you. Of my son ! Ah ! Sir, cried she after a deep sigh, desire him not to trouble me with any thing on that subject. Tell him that I am extremely sorry for the condition he is in ; that in case God should take him to himself, there is no service, which his wife and son may not expect from me. I have never indeed seen her ; but if she has not been informed of the condition he is in, he need only say where she is, and I will immediately send my coach for her ; and if the sick gentleman thinks he owes me any acknowledgment, the only testimony I desire of it is, to be excused from knowing what that unhappy wretch, who calls me his mother, has desired him to communicate to me ; however, if it is absolutely necessary I should know it, he may be satisfied with telling it you, Sir.——It may be a secret proper to be revealed to none but you, Madam, replied the ecclesiastic ; and which you would be sorry to have trusted to another. Consider, Madam, that the person who sends me is a dying man ; he may have essential reasons for speaking to none but you ; and it would be very cruel, Madam, to refuse to hearken to his entreaties in the condition he is in. No, Sir, returned she, the promise he may have made my son, does not oblige me to hear it. However, I consent he shall acquaint you with it, and if I am imprudent in this, I will accuse nobody but myself. Pray, aunt, said I then, let me beg of you to surmount this reluctance to the unknown gentleman's entreaties. Yes, Madam, rejoined Mrs. du Frainville, I promised him to bring you down to him ; because he assured me, that you would infallibly reproach yourself, if you refused to hear him.

him. How can you teize me so? cried the old lady, with much emotion; what can he have to say to me. What is the matter, Brunon? added she, casting her eyes upon her; what makes you weep? It is because she knows the sick gentleman returned I, and is concerned to see him dying. ——— What! do you know him too? replied my aunt. Yes, Madam, returned she; he has relations for whom I shall ever have sentiments of tenderness and respect, and I would name them to you, if he did not desire to be unknown. I don't want to know what he would conceal, replied my aunt; but since you know who he is, and that he says he has been acquainted with my son, have you never seen them together? Yes, Madam, I own I have, said she; I have even known his son from his most tender years. His son! returned she, has he then children? I think he has but one, Madam, Brunon replied. Oh that he had never been born! cried my aunt; what will become of him? You pierce my heart, Brunon; but speak; hide nothing from me; you are better informed than you would seem to be; where is his father now? what situation was he in when you left him? He was miserable, Madam, replied Brunon, casting down her eyes with a melancholy air. He *was* miserable! you say; say rather he *would* be so, returned she. ——— But tell me all, is he a widower? No, Madam, said she, with a confusion which was observed by none but us who knew her. I have seen them all three, but in such a condition as had you seen them, would certainly have disarmed your indignation. I have heard enough, said my aunt, with a deep sigh what a marriage! she is then with him; that woman whom the wretch chose for his wife, and who is a dishonour to him? Here the fictitious

Brunon

Brunon blushed, which gave us a very sensible pain; but she presently recovered herself, and replied with a sweet and composed air, I could engage your esteem for her, if you could only pardon her want of birth and fortune. She is virtuous, Madam, all who know her will tell you so. Her virtue alone 'tis true could not entitle her to the honour of being Mrs. Durfan; but I myself must be greatly miserable, if virtue is not sufficient to prevent our being despicable. How can you talk so, Brunon, returned she; if she was like you indeed; —

At this I perceived Brunon trembled, and looked at me to know what she should do; but while I was deliberating with myself, my aunt arose suddenly, to go down with us, and prevented this favourable opportunity of bringing on the intended reconciliation; and was so quick that the opportunity was even lost when Brunon cast her eyes upon me; and therefore I thought it better to delay it longer. Such critical moments as these ought to be laid hold of, and this I saw we had let slip. However, we went down, not one of us having the courage to utter a word. As for me, I felt a palpitation at my heart; and I began to be uneasy on my aunt's account; for I feared we were going to expose her to more than she could bear; but the blow she was going to receive was my own work, and therefore I could not go back. At last we got to the sick gentleman's apartment; my aunt sighed as she entered the room; Brunon had a mortal paleness; my knees smote each other, and Mrs. du Frainville followed us in an uneasy and mournful silence. The confessor entered the room first, and went to the patient whom they had raised up a little in his bed. His son who was weeping by him, retired a little;

little ; it began to grow duskish, the bed was placed in the darkest part of the room, and the curtains were drawn on that side next the light. Sir, said the ecclesiastic to the poor dying man, I bring you Mrs. Durfan, whom you desired to see before you received the eucharist. Here she is. The son then lifted up his weak and trembling hand, and endeavoured to pull off his cap ; but my aunt, who was just come up to him, reached out her hand to prevent him. No, Sir, no, said she, pray remain as you are ; you are but too well entitled to dispense with ceremonies. We then placed her in an elbow-chair at his bed's head, and stood by her. You desired, Sir, to speak to me ; would you have the company retire ? said she, rather listening than looking at him. Here he fetched a deep sigh, and as her arm was resting upon the bed, he reached his hand to her's, took hold of it, and in her surprise had time to press it to his lips, and imprint upon it kisses intermingled with some sighs, which were half stifled by his weakness and difficulty of breathing. At this action the mother appeared troubled ; seemed to have a confused idea of the truth, and looked at him with attention and surprise. What are you doing, said she, in a voice which her astonishment rendered louder than usual ; who are you, Sir ? Your victim, mother, returned he, in the tone of one just ready to expire ———My Son ! Oh ! unhappy Durfan ! I know thee again, but this knowledge is enough to make me die with grief, cried she, falling back in her chair, where she turned pale, and continued motionless, as if she had fainted away ; but however she did not, tho' she was not well. Our cries, together with the assistance we gave her, insensibly raising her spirits, What a surprise, Ter-

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viere, cried she, after some sighs, hast thou exposed me to? Alas! aunt, replied I, should I have deprived you of the pleasure of pardoning your dying son? Has not this young gentleman too a claim to a place in your heart? is not he worthy of being loved, and could we deprive him of your tenderness, added I, shewing her her grandson, who immediately threw himself at her feet? The tender and a ready conquered grandmother, held out one of her hands, which he kissed with tears of joy, and we all wept with him. Mrs. Dursan, who was still only Brunon, the priest himself, Mrs. de Frainville and I, all contributed to the softening my dear aunt, who was in tears herself, and saw nothing about her but tears, which thanked her for suffering herself to be touched. But however all was not done yet, we were still to soften her in favour of Brunon, who was on her knees behind young Dursan, and who notwithstanding the signs I made to her, durst not advance, lest she should injure her husband and son, by being an obstacle to their reconciliation; and indeed we had hitherto only recalled the tenderness of an offended mother; but now she was to triumph over her hatred and contempt for a stranger, whom she loved indeed, but without knowing her, and under another name. Meanwhile, my aunt continually looked upon young Dursan with complacency, without taking from him her hand which he still held in his: Arise, my child, said she, at last, I have nothing to reproach thee with. Alas! how can I resist thee, when I could not hold out against thy father. Here the caresses of this young man, and our tears redoubled. Son, said she, addressing herself to the sick gentleman, is there no remedy to be had for you? Let us send every where for help,

we have physicians in the next town, let them be sent for immediately. — But, aunt, said I, you still forget one person, who is dear to your children; for whom we all interest ourselves, and who begs to be permitted to appear before you. I understand thee, said she; well, I forgive her. But I am old, and cannot live long, and may therefore be dispensed with from seeing her. That is impossible, Madam, returned I, you have already seen her, you know her, Brunon is a witness you do. I know her! cried she; and Brunon says that I do! Oh where is she? At your feet, replied young Mr. Dursan. My aunt, immoveable at this new spectacle, sat some time without pronouncing a word; and then, holding out her hand to her amiable daughter, Come, then, Brunon, said she embracing her, come, I'll pay you for your service; you said I knew her, why did not you say I loved her too. Brunon, who from henceforward I shall call Mrs. Dursan, appeared so sensible of my aunt's goodness, that she seemed almost out of her senses; she embraced her son, she loaded Mrs. du Frainville and I with caresses; she then ran to her husband, and fell on his neck; entreated him to take courage, when he, tho' almost expiring, asked for his mother, who embraced him in her turn, extremely sorry to see him so ill. However he every moment grew weaker, and therefore pressed the ecclesiastic to conclude the rest of his office; but as after what was passed, he wanted some time for recollection, we thought it proper to retire, and my aunt unable to support such violent emotions, desired to be put to bed, when her ordinary indispositions increased to such a degree, that she could not rise to see her son again, who expired about ten at night. From this time, she fell into

a deep melancholy, and was so extremely dejected, that I sincerely pitied her; and this was followed by a fever which never left her. I need not mention Mrs. Durfan's concern for the loss of her husband, nor that of the son for being deprived of a father. The will whereby Mr. Durfan was disinherited, was not yet revoked; and perhaps they might be apprehensive, that my aunt would die before she had made another; tho' it would not have been my fault, for I had already pressed her several times to do it, but she always put me off till the next day. At last she desired Mrs. du Frainville and I to leave her alone, and presently after sent for us in again, and ordered Mrs. Durfan and her son to be called, when she gave a paper sealed up to Mrs. Durfan. This, said she, is the will I made in favour of my niece. My intention since the death of my son was to cancel it, and she has herself been continually soliciting me to it, and I now leave it in your hands, that you may be convinced that I had left her all my estate. Then taking another paper she delivered it sealed up to Mrs. du Frainville; that said she is my last will, and I desire this lady to take it under her care; and tho' I don't doubt but you will be well satisfied with it, and readily fulfil the small dispositions you will find in it; I think it proper to recommend them to you, and let you know that they are of the highest concern to me; the sincere desire of my heart; and that you cannot give me a greater proof of your gratitude, nor better honour my memory, than by faithfully executing what I here require of you. And to excite you the more readily to comply with it, I must desire you to reflect, that all the advantages you now receive, are so many obligations for which you are indebted to my niece.

SHE stopped here, and desired us to leave her to her rest, and six days after this expired. You will easily conceive, that my grief must be excessive; Mrs. Durfan used her utmost endeavours to comfort me, tho' I was very little affected by what she could say, because she did not seem to be sufficiently concerned herself; but her son succeeded better; he had in my opinion a more real sadness, and at least regretted the loss of his father with all his heart; and indeed never mentioned my aunt but with expressions of the most tender gratitude, without thinking, as his mother did, of the splendor to which they were raised; however, he entered sincerely into my affliction, and this might make me judge more favourably of the rest. Mrs. du Frainville came again to the castle two days after my aunt's decease, with the sealed papers which were opened in the presence of several witnesses, with all the forms that were judged necessary. My aunt, by this writing, restored her grandson to all the rights his father had forfeited by his marriage; but it was on condition that he should marry me: for in case he should marry another, or that he was not agreeable to me, he should be obliged to give me the third part of all his estates and effects. That the affair of our marriage, however, should be concluded in a year, from the day that the will was opened; and that I should receive three thousand livres, till our nuptials were consummated, or I had taken possession of a third part of his estate. All these conditions, said he, while this article was reading are superfluous, I will have nothing without my cousin. At this, I cast down my eyes, and blushed with confusion and pleasure, without making him any reply. Stay, son, till the whole is read, cried Mrs. Durfan, in a tone rough and hasty enough;

enough ; which neither Mrs. du Frainville, nor I could help taking notice of. I should be ashamed to have been silent, replied he, in a mild tone, and then they read on. The rudeness with which Mrs. Durfan treated her son, probably proceeded from her being acquainted with the meanness of my circumstances ; for I was not now qualified to aspire to one of the most splendid rank and fortune. However, some days after, she could not forbear telling Mrs. du Frainville, that I had great reason to regret the loss of an aunt, who had been prodigious bountiful to me. What do you mean by bountiful ? replied that lady, who was shocked at her ungrateful manner of speaking of me ; you ought not to forget that you would have had nothing, had it not been for her disinterested and generous industry. Pray don't look upon her as a girl who has nothing ; for your son in marrying her, will possess the heir of all his estate. Thus he thinks of it himself, and you, Madam, cannot think otherwise, without being guilty of an ingratitude, of which I don't believe you capable. As to their marriage, replied Mrs. Durfan with a smile, my son is yet so young, that it will be time enough to think of that some years hence. As you please, Madam, returned Mrs. du Frainville, who would not condescend to make her a formal answer, and who immediately left her with so much coolness, that Mrs. Durfan made it a pretence for seeing her no more.

WHAT a false idea had we formed of this woman ! not satisfied with deferring our marriage, she consulted the most able lawyers, to know if it was not possible to set aside my aunt's will, and deprive me of all that she was so good as to leave me. This Mrs. du Frainville acquainted me with. But young Durfan durst not take notice of it to me,

tho' it threw him into the utmost despair. He then loved me beyond expression, nor did I dissemble my tenderness for him; and the worse his mother used me, the dearer he appeared to me, whom I thought so different from her; thus my heart recompensed him for not resembling his mother. But how ungrateful soever she was, she had a prodigious ascendant over him, so that he had not the courage to speak to her as he ought to have done. But his mother's ingratitude extended farther than endeavouring to deprive me of the third part of the estate; she even resolved to drive me from her house, in hopes that her son, ceasing to see me, would overcome his tenderness, and consequently be more easily brought to comply with her desires. Miss, said she, one day, how comes it that Mrs. du Frainville is still your friend, tho' she is no longer mine. I must ask you that, Madam, returned I, you know, better than I, what has passed between you. Better than you! cried she smiling with an ironical air, you have a mind to be a little pleasant; she would have been more tractable, if you would have been so; the marriage is not in so great a hurry. It is not I that would have it so, said I, but she does not think you ought to defer it, if I consent to it. How! Miss, you have a mind to quarrel with me too, cried she, leaving me. Do you reproach us already for the service you have done us? Truly, so promising a temper alarms me for my son. I have known Brunon do me more justice, cried I, as she went off. But from this moment, we seldom spoke to each other, and her repeated affronts made her so intollerable to me, that three months after my aunt's decease I was obliged to leave the castle; notwithstanding the sorrow of her son whom I left sick with grief, and at variance with

with her. I could neither see nor acquaint him with the day of my going, his mother alledging so many unaccountable reasons for not consenting to it. When the time was come which I had fixed upon for my departure, she told me she could not comprehend why I should desire to leave her; and that her son who was in a fever, would be unable to support such a painful separation. So much deceit gave me such a disgust to her, that I made her no answer, but stepped directly into the chaise Mrs. du Frainville had sent for me. I won't mention the rage that lady was in, at the recital I made her, of the ill treatment I had been exposed to at the castle. I had wrote twice to my mother after my aunt's decease, but had received no answer, and had not heard the least news of her for several years past, and this gave me very great uneasiness. I saw myself sure of nothing; what will become of me, thought I, if Mrs. Dursan should gain her design, and have my aunt's will declared void? Nor could I abuse Mrs. du Frainville's goodness, who kindly offered me a retreat. So that I could only have recourse to my mother; and as one of Mrs. du Frainville's friends was going to Paris, I was willing to take the advantage of her company, which I did a fortnight or three weeks after my leaving the castle. The day before that of our departure, Mrs. Dursan came to see me, paid me what was due of my pension, and desired if I should want any more money, I would let her know it, and she would remit to me whatever sum I had occasion for. This discourse was attended with the strongest protestations of affection, which indeed had but one fault, their being too polite. I had thought them less insincere, had she spoke with more simplicity and freedom; for a genuine good heart, and a sincere friendship are

strangers to compliments. Her son still continued sick, and as I had no hopes of seeing him before I set out, I left a letter for him, which Mrs. du Frainville promised to deliver into his own hands.

My companion and I travelled with several passengers in a stage-coach. When we were at an inn, about twenty leagues from Paris, we took up a lady of a genteel appearance, she was tall, and seemed near fifty years old; she appeared as if she had just recovered from a fit of illness; but notwithstanding her paleness, her features seemed formed with an admirable delicacy, and had something in them, that shewed she was a lady of quality: for her person had that natural air of superiority which does not proceed from pride; but from being accustomed to the regards, and respect of those of the most exalted stations. Scarce had we got half a league from the inn, when the motion of the coach disordered our new companion, on which we proposed to stop, but she would not consent to it, and said she was only a little sick, and it would soon be over. As I filled one of the best places, I pressed her to change seats with me, in a manner as sincere as obliging. She appeared extremely touched at my entreaties, and refused me in such an engaging manner, that I could not forbear insisting upon her compliance with the greater eagerness; but I did not prevail upon her; however her indisposition soon went off. As she was placed near me, we frequently conversed together. Mrs. Darcie my companion being pretty old, frequently called me her daughter when she spoke to me, and upon this the unknown lady thought she had been my mother; but I undeceived her, and told her I was going to Paris to my mother, whom I had not seen for a great while. I

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wish I had been that mother, said she, with a sweet and tender air, without enquiring any farther, or mentioning her own affairs. When we arrived at the place in which we were to dine, it being a fine day, I was desirous of taking a walk in the garden to refresh myself, by tasting the fresh air, as well as to recreate myself a little, being weary with sitting so long in the coach. When dinner was ready, I went to rejoin my fellow-travellers, but found the unknown lady was wanting to complete our company, and upon enquiry was told by our landlord, that she desired to dine by herself in another room, on which I immediately went to her, and found her going to dinner, with a small slice of boiled meat, and a little soup before her. I confess, such a frugal meal surprized me, but I dissembled my astonishment. How comes it, Madam, said I, that you leave us, and that we are not honoured with your company at dinner? We can't consent that you should desert us; but I am happily come in good time, for you have not touched any thing yet; you are sent for by the whole company, and not a soul of us will sit down to table till you come. As soon as she saw me, she rose up in a hurry, as if she would keep me from the sight of her dinner, on which I conformed myself to her behaviour, and advanced no farther. Pray, Miss, said she, don't take any notice of me; I have been a great while sick, and must observe a particular regimen which is necessary for the recovery of my health, which I should never be able to do in company; and I am sure, Miss, you would be so far from persuading me to expose myself to any danger, that you would be the first to hinder me from it. I readily believed what she said, but did not the less insist on her going with me. I can't consent to leave you thus alone, Madam,

said I, you may trust yourself to me, and we need only tell the people to join your dinner to ours; on this I took hold of her arm, and obliged her to follow me without knowing what to reply, notwithstanding her reluctance to accompany me. When stopping short with an air of sadness, Dear Miss, cried she in a melancholy tone, how pleasing, but yet painful is this obliging tenderness! Shall I be plain with you? I have been in the country, where I intended to stay only a month for the recovery of my health, but being taken ill of a fever, I have been obliged to stay much longer than I intended, and have just money sufficient to carry me to Paris, where I shall be to-morrow; this I tell you as a secret, and therefore I beg you will excuse me to the company, on account of my ill state of health. However carelessly she affected to mention her want of money, I could not help being moved at what she said, and discovering at the same time, that she wanted that tranquility in her countenance, which she expressed in her words: How, Madam, said I! with a gay and lively frankness, and at the same time putting my purse into her hand, shall I then have the honour to be good for something to you? Make use of this money, till you are at Paris, where you will get a supply, and pray don't punish us for your want of precaution. At this she sighed, and in spite of herself let fall some tears. You are too amiable, cried she, struggling with embarrassment; your behaviour charms me, and heightens my friendship for you; but I must beg to be excused from taking what you offer with such a grace. If it is indifferent to you to stay here alone, returned I with a mortified air, it will not be so to me, to be deprived of your company, it is a favour I presume to ask of you, but indeed don't deserve to obtain it. You not deserve to obtain it! cried

ried she, Ah! how can one help admiring you? well, Miss, what shall I take, since you threaten me with believing that I don't love you; I will do what you desire, and follow you immediately: She then took one *Lewis d'or*. I insisted upon her taking two, and then we went up, rejoined our company, and ordered the dinner to be brought in; which over, we stepped into the coach, and supped together in the same agreeable manner. The next day when we were about a league from Paris, a coach met us; and an elderly gentleman in it asked if we had not Mrs. Darcie with us, this was a person she had wrote to, to desire him to meet us, and provide us with a convenient lodging; but as we could not conveniently get at our portmanteau and boxes, we chose not to alight till we came to the next village, about half a mile off, where the coachman told us he was to stop. While they were busy in taking our baggage out of the boot, the unknown lady took me aside to return the two *Lewis d'ors* I had forced her to borrow of me. But as she was not yet at Paris, she could not prevail upon me to take them again, and I insisted that she should keep them to oblige her to tell me where she lived. I should have been as ready to tell you that, returned she, if you had taken the money again; my name is Darneuil, (this was only the name of a small country-seat of her's,) and you may hear of me at the Marquis de Viry's in St. Lewis-street, who is one of my friends. Tell me now in your turn, added she, where I shall find you. Indeed, Madam, said I, I can't tell that, but I will let you know it to-morrow. Here I heard Mrs. Darcie call me, and immediately went to her, when we both took our leave of Mrs. Darneuil, and I embraced her at parting with the greatest tenderness, and in an hour's time arrived

at the house Mrs. Darcie's friend had provided for us.

THE next day, my companion and I went to find my mother, and set out in a coach to go to St. Honore's-street, opposite the Capucin Friars, where I had been informed the Marquis my father-in-law lived. Our coachman stopped at the above-mentioned place, and asked if the Marchioness de * * * was at home. She has been gone from hence these two years, said a Swiss who came to the door; after the Marquis's death, his son sold the house to my master, who lives in it now. The Marquis dead! cried I, with a mixture of trouble and surprise. I began to be in pain for my mother, which increased upon a recollection, that he said her son was married; and in fine, this news struck me, as if it had been attended with a thousand dismal circumstances, which I dreaded without knowing why. Pray, how long has he been dead? replied I, in a voice quite changed. Why I think it is about seventeen or eighteen months since, said he; he died about a month or six weeks after he had married the Marquis his son, who lives at present in the Place-Royal. Does the Marchioness his mother live with him still? returned I. No, I think I have heard that she does not, said he; but you need only go to his house, to know where she lives; 'tis likely you may get some information there. Well, said Mrs. Darcie, let us return home then, we had better defer going to the Place-Royal till after dinner. As you please, Madam, replied I, with a troubled and disordered countenance. On which we returned home. In the afternoon we went to the Place-Royal, but my misfortunes were not to be at an end so soon: neither my brother nor sister-in-law were at home; their porter told us, that they were gone to a country-

country-seat that was fifteen or twenty leagues from Paris; that my mother did not live with them, and that he knew not where she lived; that she had been there that very day about eleven in the morning to see her son, whose absence she had not been acquainted with; that she was much surprised and sorry to find him gone, that she said she was just come out of the country, and retired without leaving any directions. At this, my troubles increased, and I began to be extremely disturbed. You say she was sorry to find him gone! replied I. Yes, Miss, said he, I thought so by her looks. But how did she come here to-day? said I, from a mistrust of her circumstances, and in order to get some information from his answer; was she in her own coach, or in one of her friends? As to coaches, replied he, she has none; she was alone, and very much fatigued; for she rested herself here above a quarter of an hour. Alone and without a coach! the Marquis's mother on foot! Oh! monstrous! cried I in a strange kind of amazement. But don't you know any body hereabouts, added I, that can tell me her lodgings? No, Miss, said he, she comes here very seldom, and always at a time when we have no company; and makes her visits so short, that I don't remember I have ever seen her speak to any body but the Marquis her son. She always comes in a morning, and sometimes even before he is up. Could any thing appear worse, or give me a more frightful picture of my mother's wretched situation? What shall we do then? what resource have I left to find her? cried I to Mrs. Darcie, who began now to have no good opinion of her circumstances. If we make a careful enquiry, it will be impossible not to find her, said she; you have not the least reason to fear it. I made her no answer but a sigh.

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It would have been now very convenient for us to have enquired after Mrs. Darneuil, being near the Marquis de Viry's; but my mother took up all my thoughts, which were employed about the dreadfulness of her condition, and the impossibility of ever tenderly embracing her. Mrs. Darcieriendeavoured in vain to raise my hopes, and dissipate my alarms. That mother who came on foot to see her son, so weary, that she was obliged to rest herself; that mother, who made so poor a figure, and was so buried in oblivion, that even the servants of her son did not know where she lived, perpetually returned upon my thoughts.

FROM the Place-Royal, we went to Mrs. Darcieri's attorney, who was endeavouring to recover an estate for her, and whom we took into the coach to carry him to our lodgings, that he might take into his possession some writings which he wanted. As he was mentioning in the way a person he was to see the next day, who lived in the Marshes, which is near the place where I hoped to find my mother, I asked him if he did not know her, without telling him that I was her daughter. Yes, said he, I have seen her two or three times before the Marquis's death, but since that time I don't know what is become of her; and have only heard that she is not very happy. Well, Sir, but what situation is she in? cried I, with an emotion, which I had the greatest difficulty to conceal; her son is rich, and in a very exalted station. That is true, returned he, he has married the daughter of the Duke de N——; but I believe the Marchioness is at variance with him and her daughter-in-law. The Marchioness, they say, was the widow of a poor insignificant country gentleman, of whom the deceased Marquis became so enamoured, that notwithstanding his immense riches, and high titles,

titles, he rashly married her. But now he is dead, and his son has given his hand to the Duke de N——'s daughter, it is easy to imagine, that the young Marchioness does not cast a very favourable eye upon such a mother-in-law, and is never fond of being allied to all the petty squires, and mean relations of her first husband's family; among whom they say there is a daughter, that they have never seen, and probably will have no great curiosity ever to see. This is all that I have heard on the subject.

THE tears flowed from my eyes all the time he was speaking; and when he had done, I was unable to answer him: whilst Mrs. Darcie observed my grief, and blushed to hear him talk thus. Who do you call petty squires, Sir, said she, as soon as he had done? the young Marchioness must be very ill informed, if tho' a duke's daughter, she can blush at the alliance you speak of. I who am of the same part of the country as her mother-in-law, whom she so much despises, can tell her that the Marchioness, whose maiden name was de Tresse, is of one of the most noble and antient families in our province. I can tell her that Mr. de Terviere her first husband could yield in these respects to none, and that there is not a more antient, nor has been a family more considerable by the extent of its lands; and that decayed as it is now in these respects, Mr. de Terviere might have left above twenty thousand livres a year to his widow, had not his father disinherited him, and made his younger brother his heir: and in short that there is not any Marquis or Duke in France, who might not with honour marry Miss de Terviere, that girl whom they have so little curiosity to see at Paris, and whom no lady here will ever excel either in the charms of her person, her wit, or amiable character.

rafter. The attorney then observing my eyes moist, and probably recollecting that I was the person who enquired after the old Marchioness, suspected that I might probably be her daughter. Madam, said he, with some confusion to Mrs. Darcie, tho' I have only repeated what I have heard from others, I am afraid I have been guilty of an imprudence; is not this Miss de Terviere herself? Yes, Sir, returned she, without the least hesitation; you are not mistaken; this is that little country girl, whom they probably imagine a kind of peasant, and whom perhaps they would be very happy if they could resemble. I don't think any lady, tho' ever so charming, would be a loser by it, returned he, begging my pardon. Here the coach stopped at our door; and I only answered him, by a respectful bow.

You will easily judge, Marianne, that as soon as he was gone, I did not forget to thank Mrs. Darcie, for that obliging indignation, with which she had defended the honour of our family. The attorney had confirmed me in the opinion I had entertained of my mother's situation, and the more I thought she had reason to complain, the more I was afflicted at not knowing where to find her. It is true I did not know her, but this made me more ardently desire to see her. How great, how interesting an adventure is it to find again an unknown mother! That very name carries in it something inexpressibly delightful! But what most contributed to awake my tenderness for her, was to think that she was despised and in trouble; her afflictions made me sympathize with her in her distress; while my affection for her, transferred to myself those affronts which I imagined she endured; and methought I should find an extreme pleasure in letting her know how much I

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was affected by them. Possibly my desire of seeing her, would not have been so lively, if I had thought her happy; for then I could not have flattered myself with being so well received; but I was coming to her in circumstances that insured her affection, and was persuaded that her misfortunes would encrease her tenderness for me, and make me find her a better mother.

WE sought for her with the utmost care, for ten or twelve days together, without being able to find where she lived; when tired at last with our fruitless enquiries, we went again to the Place-Royal, in hopes that in this time she had called there again, and having heard that she had been enquired for by two ladies, might have left directions where we might find her, in case we should call again. But our search was still in vain: as she had heard that the marquis would not return under three weeks or a month's time, she probably did not intend to come again till that time was expired. But in the midst of my vexation upon this disappointment, I happened to think that we were in the neighbourhood of our fellow-traveller, Mrs. Darneuil, whom I was to enquire of at the Marquis de Viry's; we went thither directly, and Mrs. Darcie's footman knocked at the door, but nobody came; he then knocked harder a second time, when at last an old man with long white hair came to the door, and without asking any questions, told us the Marquis and his lady were both gone to Versailles. They are not the persons we want, said I, we come to see Mrs. Darnueil. Oh Mrs. Darnueil! said the old man, she don't live here. But are you not just come out of the country? I answered that we were. Well then, said he, be so good as to stay a little, and you shall speak with one of her servants, who
desired

desired me to let her know when you came. On this he walked back with slow steps, and soon after she came up to the coach door. Can you tell us where we may find Mrs. Darnueil, said I, we thought we should find her here? No, ladies, said she, she don't live here. But did not you, Miss, arrive with her at Paris, and lend her some money a few days ago? Yes, I forced her to take some, returned I, and should be extremely glad to see her again. Pray where does she live? In the Fauxbourg St. Germain, replied she, (this was the part of the town in which we lived) but I have forgot the name of the street she lives in. However, she ordered me to enquire where you lodged, continued she, if you came to ask for her, and at the same time to return you these two Lewis d'ors. I took them, and told her if she would learn the name of the street where she lived, I would send to know it in a day or two's time. She promised that she would, and then we left her.

As we returned home, we observed a concourse of people assembled at a house but two doors from our lodgings. All the neighbours were at their windows or their doors, as if some considerable accident had happened. This raised our curiosity; but as we were going to ask the cause, we saw the gentlewoman who belonged to our house, making her way thro' the crowd with an air that shewed she had some concern in the incident; she was full of action, shrugged up her shoulders, and was followed by a little man very meanly dressed, who was talking to her with his hat in his hand. As she came in, we asked her what was the matter. I will tell you in a moment, ladies, said she, but must first finish a little business with this man, and went with him into another room. A few

minutes

minutes after this, she returned to us again. I have been witness to a scene, said she, that has prodigiously affected me. As I was returning from visiting a lady who lives hard by, I observed a crowd about this man's door; he keeps an inn, and is my tenant. I went into the house immediately, to see what was the matter, when I observed a woman of a genteel appearance, that seemed under the greatest pressure; she looked as pale as if she was going to expire; the tears were streaming from her eyes, and tho' her countenance had all the marks of the utmost grief and amazement, she had still a very noble and graceful air. This man and his daughter were railing at her, and endeavouring to force her to leave the house, while her tears were almost the only arguments she could make use of to soften their hearts. The man directed his discourse with great heat to every one who came in, as if he would appeal to them for the justice of his proceeding; and therefore repeated his story several times, but always with some additional circumstances. As I was concerned to see the gentlewoman treated with so little ceremony, I listened with the greatest attention, and found that about ten or twelve days ago, she came to take a room in his house, with promises to let him have some money the next day, but failed in the performance. Two days after this, she was taken very ill of a fever, and the man who did not know her, provided her with a surgeon and an apothecary, which you know must put her to a necessary expence; he even supplied her with every thing proper for a sick person; but the man who is far from being rich, finding she was a little better to-day, and being applied to by the surgeon that had let her blood, and the apothecary that furnished her with medicines,

cines, who were desirous of being paid immediately by him, since he was the person that had sent for them; as they had both applied to her for that purpose, without receiving any satisfaction: The poor man was frightened to find that she had no money, and not only afraid of losing what she owed him, but what he might further advance, resolved to make her leave his house. He had no sooner taken this resolution, than there arrived a pedlar, who travelled the country, and commonly lodged at his house when in town. All his rooms were full, and there was only this woman's, which he now looked upon as empty, since she had given him no money. Upon this he went up to her, and desired her to provide for herself, and not to hinder him from letting the chamber to one who was able to pay him; told her she already owed him a great deal, that he did not desire her to pay him now, but only to leave him something for his security. At this the poor gentlewoman (for I can hardly help calling her so notwithstanding her dreadful circumstances) who was still too weak to be removed so suddenly, intreated him to let her stay a few days; told him that he had no reason to make himself uneasy, and that she would not only pay him very soon, but reward him for his care of her; and that in a week's time at farthest, she would send him with a letter to a person, from whom he would not return without a sum of money. She begged him to have patience, and said that she had no pledge to leave but some linen and clothes, that would be of no value to him, tho' they were absolutely necessary to her; and that if he knew her, he would be convinced that she would not deceive him. But he would not be prevailed upon; he had already forced her out of the room; locked up her box, which he was

resolved to keep; and thus the dispute continued in the hall, where the man and his daughter were railing at the poor gentlewoman, who could not think of going. I saw her consternation and shame; which was greater than can be imagined. At last she cast her eyes upon me, and immediately took me aside, Dear Madam, cried she, (drying her eyes, and endeavouring to suppress and keep down some rising sighs) for heaven's sake, if you have any ascendancy over this man, prevail upon him to grant me this short delay. I give you my word he shall be paid. This was spoke with an air which penetrated my heart, raised my pity, and even filled me with respect. The whole debt was only ten crowns; if I lose it, said I to myself, it will not ruin me. On this, I told the landlord that I would pay him. I desired her to return to her room; her box was restored to her, and I brought the man with me to pay him at my house. This, ladies, is the story, which I have related as minutely as possible. It has made such an impression upon my mind, that I never could have been one moment pleased with myself if I had not advanced the money.

Mrs. Darcie and I were sensibly affected at this recital; we gave the relater those praises which her great humanity required, and resolved to follow her example, by endeavouring to relieve this distressed person from her troubles. Tho' the master of the inn is appeased, said we, the gentlewoman has no money, and may therefore be neglected. Be so good, Madam, as to give her from us this small sum. With all my heart, replied she, she shall have it this minute, and immediately left us. When she returned, she told us she left the gentlewoman in bed, much disordered by this unhappy adventure; that she could not receive the ten crowns

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we had sent her without blushing; and that she begged us to consider it as only lent her, which would increase the obligation, and render her gratitude more worthy of herself and us. This compliment was so far from displeasing us, that it confirmed the high opinion we had entertained of her; and we were so much prejudiced in her favour, that I wonder we did not make her a visit. It is certain I thought of proposing it to Mrs. Darcie, who has told me since, that she also was inclined to propose it to me.——The dismal circumstances of the unknown person, made me reflect on those of my mother, tho' I could not think there was the least resemblance between them; for I imagined that tho' her's were not splendid, yet they were at least such as would be comfortable to any woman of a much inferior rank, tho' they might not possibly be so to her.

Two or three days after this, as Mrs. Darcie and I were returning from church, I thought I saw at a small distance from us, the servant I spoke to at the Marquis de Viry's; I had promised to send to her, to know where Mrs. Darneuil lived, which I did the day after, but she was gone out, so that I was glad to see her, and pointed her out to Mrs. Darcie, who knew her as well as I. This woman who saw us at a distance, seemed to know us too, and stood at our neighbour the inn-keeper's door. When we came up to her, we bid the coachman stop. I am very glad to see you again, said I; I fancy you have been to see Mrs. Darneuil, or else are come from her. Won't you tell us where she lives? If you will be so good as to stay till I speak to a lady who lodges here, said she, I will come back and give you an answer in a moment. A lady! replied Mrs. Darcie with great astonishment, (for we had been informed, that the

unfortunate

unfortunate unknown woman was the only one of our sex that lodged in this house.) Who can she be, pray? added she. Then turning to me, Possibly, the lady she speaks of, is the person who had that sad adventure the other day. 'Tis the same, replied the chambermaid, without giving me time to answer; she was not born to receive such gross affronts. If you are willing, said Mrs. Darcie to me, we will pay her a visit. You may, ladies, replied the servant, provided you will let me go first, that she may be apprized of your coming; perhaps she may desire you to spare her confusion. No, no, said Mrs. Darcie, we are not afraid of displeasing her, she has heard of us already. You may go, and we will follow you. We alighted directly, and waited in the passage to her chamber, while she went in. As she left the door upon the jar, we could see her sitting up in her bed, with a supine languid air. On a sudden the tears gushed from her eyes, and she wrung her hands. When Mrs. Darcie cried out, Heavens! child, it is Mrs. Darneuil. I then heard her sigh, and saw her eyes fixed upon me, with a languishing, mortified and tender look. Moved at this dreadful and unexpected sight, I ran to embrace her with such a sudden vivacity, that I held her for some time in my arms without her being able to speak a word, whilst the tears incessantly streamed from her eyes. At last, (when her first emotions, mixed without doubt with humility and confidence, were over,) I had doomed myself to see you no more, said she, with a sigh, but never did any resolution cost me so dear. I redoubled my caresses at this discourse. How unaccountable was that resolution, said I, taking hold of one of her hands, whilst she gave the other to Mrs. Darcie; how little did you know us! what monsters did you take

take us for? alas! who is the person that is not subject to the various unavoidable misfortunes of life. How could you think we could ever forget the respect we owe you; or that any circumstances of life could ever render you less dear to us, or less worthy of our friendship. Mrs. Darcie enteredtained her with pretty near the same discourse, while every look she gave us, was a sufficient proof that she was out of her sphere. The chambermaid all this while stood at some distance from us, with the tears in her eyes, and I could not help blaming her for not acquainting us the first time she saw us with this lady's unhappy situation. I would have done it with all my heart, said she; but I could not dispense with my lady's order to the contrary. I have been seventeen years in her service; it was she that placed me with the Marchioness de Viry, and I shall always look upon her as my mistress, and think myself obliged to obey her in whatever she commands me. Don't chide her, said my sick friend, I shall never forget her kindness; could you believe that she should generously offer me, of her own accord, all the money she had in the world; while five or six persons of the greatest distinction, with whom I have lived in the strictest friendship, have refused to lend me a trifling sum, that would have saved me from the dreadful streights to which I have been reduced, and have shamefully put me off with empty words, and an insipid affectation of politeness. 'Tis true I did not take her money, yours seasonably prevented me. The gentlewoman with whom you lodge, has rescued me from the most cutting part of my troubles, and I shall acquit myself in a few days of all these debts; but my gratitude will be eternal.

SCARCE had she uttered these words; when Mrs. Darcie's footman came to tell her that her attorney waited for her at the door, to give her an answer about an affair that would not admit of the least delay. I know what it is, said she; he has but one word to say, I will go and speak to him, and shall be back again immediately. Pray, Madam, said she, addressing herself to Mrs. Darcie, think no more of what is passed; be easy in your present condition, and only think how to render us of service to you; your situation ought to give a concern to every virtuous mind, and indeed we are too happy, when we have an opportunity of serving those who are like you. The sick lady only thanked her by squeezing her hand, and a look inexpressibly tender. I think myself happy, said she, as soon as she was gone, in the midst of my misfortunes, when I consider who it is that gives me relief; that it is neither my friends, my relations, those with whom I have passed a great part of my life, nor even my children who fly from me and abandon me. Doubtless I should have perished in the most wretched manner, in the midst of all these resources, if it had not been for you, Miss, to whom I am unknown, who owe me nothing, and who with the most engaging sensibility, and in the most amiable manner, at once supply the place of friends, relations and children. Had it not been for you and your companion, whom I found with you in the coach; had it not been for this girl, (suffer me to mention her with you, for her zeal and affection render her worthy of the honour I do her) in short, had it not been for the lady with whom you lodge, to whom I am an entire stranger, and who could not see my distress without being moved with compassion; I should have died in the greatest want, and in an

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astounding obscurity. Astonishing indeed for one of my rank ! Lord what is life ! what the miseries with which it is attended !——Dear Madam ! cried I, extremely touched, begin to forget these terrible scenes ; let me second Mrs. Darcie's entreaties to prevail upon you to lose the prospect of these frightful, painful events. Give us the pleasure of seeing you full of tranquility, that you may dissipate the uneasiness you have occasioned in our minds.——Well, then, I have done said she ; you are in the right, for there is no adversity, no calamity, which such engaging goodness ought not entirely to remove. Let us talk then, Miss, of your concerns. Where is that mother you came to meet again, after an absence of so many years ? how did she receive you ? how tenderly she ought to love you ? how happy must she think herself in having such a daughter ? Heaven, indeed, has given me one ; but I have not the least reason to complain of her, far from it. She could not pronounce these last words without the utmost concern and emotion. Alas ! Madam, returned I sighing too, you talk of the tenderness of my mother, but I durst not flatter myself with the thoughts of having any share in her affection, and shall think myself very happy if she is not sorry to see me, tho' it is twenty years since I was with her. But pray let us return to yourself again ; you have been here but very ill attendance ; you want a nurse, and I will order the master of the house, when I leave you, to provide you with one before night.

I THOUGHT she was going to answer me, but was astonished to see her suddenly burst into tears, then recollecting the number of years, which I had passed remote from my mother ; Twenty years, cried she, with a pensive and dejected countenance

I cannot hear of this without the utmost grief. Just heaven ! what reason has your mother to reproach herself, as well as I ! Oh ! Miss, tell me, added she, without giving me time for reflection, why she neglected you to such a degree ? I was, replied I, but two years old when she married a second husband, and a few weeks after went to Paris, where she had a son who without doubt effaced every idea of me from her heart. Since she has been gone I have had no friend near her to awake her tenderness for me, by putting her in mind that she had a daughter. I have never received above three or four letters from her in my life ; and am just come from an aunt who is lately dead, with whom I have lived six or seven years without ever receiving any news of my mother, to whom I wrote several times to no purpose. I have sought for her here according to the last direction I had received ; but in vain : my father-in-law is dead ; his son is married, and is now in the country with the Marchioness his wife ; but no body can tell me where to find my mother who does not live with him. So that notwithstanding a thousand enquiries, I am still as much in the dark with respect to her as ever. But what alarms me most, and fills me with a mortal inquietude, is the apprehension that she is in indigent circumstances ; for I have heard that her son, whom she has been so extravagantly fond of, has made himself unworthy of her tenderness by using her unkindly.

I COULD not conclude this discourse, without shedding tears ; but the unknown lady, the fictitious Mrs. Darneuil, who had been weeping before, had her eyes eagerly fixed upon mine whilst I was speaking, and seemed to restrain her tears to hear me with the greater attention ; her looks were wild and expressive of the utmost inquietude, and

she seemed to be full of the most violent agitation. When I had done, she made me no answer; she was stunned and speechless, the air of her countenance expressed the greatest emotion; I participated in the trouble which I saw painted there: and seemed to anticipate the discovery of a surprizing event. We beheld each other without either of us being able to break this profound silence; till at last she spoke, and with a trembling voice said, I believe, Miss, your mother is not unknown to me; pray where does that son live of whom you enquired for her? at the Place-Royal, replied I, with a voice as much altered as her's. And his name? added she, with precipitation, as if her breath had been exhausted. The Marquis de *** , returned I trembling. Oh! my dear Terviere! cried she aloud, sinking into my arms. At this exclamation, which immediately informed me of her being my mother, I gave a loud shriek, which frightened Mrs. Darcie, who had just left her attorney, and was coming up stairs. Uncertain what might be the cause of my crying out in an inn like this, which could be supposed to harbour none but persons of a mean rank, she cried out too, to make the people come up, and give me some assistance in case of need. The landlord and his daughter came running to her, followed by her footman, frightened at the noise she made, and asked the cause of it. Follow me, follow me, cried she hastily, I have just heard a shriek from the room of your sick lodger, with whom I left the young lady I brought with me; let us at all hazards go in together. When they entered the chamber, they found me speechless, weak, pale, and in a kind of stupidity, in which I was weeping thro' the different emotions of joy, surprize and grief. My mother was fainted away, and had given no sign

f knowledge since I held her in my arms; while the chambermaid, whom I was unable to assist, was using her utmost endeavours to bring her to herself. What is the matter? cried Mrs. Darcie as she came in? what ails you, Miss? I could give her no other answer, but my sighs and tears; and then lifting up my hand, I shewed my mother, as if this gesture had been sufficient to inform her, who that dear person was. What is all this, added she, is she dying? No, Madam, replied the chambermaid; but she has just known her daughter again, and fainted away immediately. Yes, said I then, endeavouring to recover myself, it is my mother. Your mother! cried she, hastening to her to afford her some assistance. What the Marchioness de * * *? what a strange adventure! A Marchioness! said the inn-keeper, joining his hands together with amazement; Oh the dear lady! had she told me her quality, I durst not have given her the least pain. However their endeavours insensibly recovered her spirits, and she at last opened her eyes. But I shall pass over in silence our mutual caresses, and tender endearments. The affecting circumstances in which I found her again; the novelty and surprizing manner of our acquaintance and friendship; the pleasure I found in seeing her and calling her mother; the long time that she had forgot her duty to me; all the hardships she had made me suffer; and that kind of revenge I took on her heart by the tenderness of mine, all contributed to render her more dear to me, than perhaps she would have been had I always lived with her. Ah my Terviere! ah my daughter! cried she, how guilty thy transports render me! But this sudden flood of joy at our unexpected meeting soon cost us very dear, for whether the violence of the emotions she had experienced, had

caused too great a revolution in her mind, or that her fever joined to her sorrow had weakened her too much, a few days after this she was seized with a palsy on her right side, which soon removed to the other. I was extremely afflicted at her melancholy condition, and should have been quite inconsolable, if they had not flattered me with the hopes that she would soon recover; but however they were mistaken. When our transports began a little to abate, I proposed to remove her to our house; but her fever which was grown more violent, together with her extreme weakness, would not permit it, and a physician I sent for, was absolutely against it. So that I then only thought of lodging with her, that I might never be obliged to leave her; but the landlord assured me that his house was already full. I will then, mother, said I, have a bed made by yours. No, returned she, that is impossible; the room is already much too small; and I would not have you think of it: preserve your health, my dear, for my sake; you would find but little repose here, and your ill accommodation would be an additional uneasiness to me; you live very near, I shall have the consolation of seeing you as often as you please, and a nurse will be sufficient to attend me. But I did not know how to leave her in this wretched lodging, and therefore begged in the most affectionate manner that she would permit me to stay with her, but she would not listen to my entreaties. Mrs. Darcie was of her opinion, and it was resolved, in spite of my inclination to the contrary, that I should be satisfied with coming to see her, till she was well enough to be removed somewhere else. I therefore went to her room every day as soon as I was up, and staid with her till night.

As I was desirous of knowing the cause of her being reduced to such dreadful circumstances, I desired her the day after we came to the knowledge of each other, to give me an insight into this surprising part of her history which she very readily consented to.

I LIVED happily, said she, with the Marquis my husband for near twenty years, which passed on in an almost uninterrupted tranquility. My son was the object of our fondest love; a love which was attended with such an excessive weakness, as to prompt us to indulge him in the most unbounded desires; we gave him no restraint, entirely neglected the improvement of his mind, and suffered him to imbibe all the silly prejudices of vanity and folly. When he was about nineteen, the Marquis his father, who wished to see him married before he died, desired me to speak to the Duke de N——— for his daughter; I did so with joy; the Duke was pleased with the match, readily accepted my proposal, and a fortnight after our young couple were married. But while our joy was at the height, the Marquis was seized with a complication of distempers, which in about six weeks time carried him off. I was left in very easy and comfortable circumstances, and had I not been blinded by my tenderness for my son, I had never known the miseries I have since suffered, which indeed have been a just punishment of my guilty neglect of thee. Infatuated with my affection for this idol of my thoughts, I had the imprudence to renounce all my rights, and to reserve to myself only a very moderate pension; which I voluntarily consented to, as he obliged himself to have me with him in his house, and defray all my expences. I was received very politely; and the first month passed without having any reason to

complain of their behaviour, tho' it could not be much extolled. I was treated in such a cold, tho' civil manner, as the heart is never satisfied with, and which we know not how to explain, would we make people sensible of the defects of it. But now my son began to treat me with neglect. My daughter-in-law, who was of a proud and haughty temper, chanced one day to see some gentlemen of our province, who came very indifferently dressed to pay me a visit; on this she imagined I must be greatly inferior to the Marquis, who had done me the honour to marry me; and upon this redoubled her coldness for me, gradually suppressed those little regards which she had hitherto never neglected, and at last shewed me so little respect, that her behaviour became quite intolerable, and I resolved to let her know it. I can dispense with that duty you owe me as the Marquis's mother, said I one day to her; be as undutiful to me as you please; your honour is more concerned in it than mine; and I shall leave it to the public to do me justice; but I will never suffer you to treat me with less politeness than you dare do your equals. I forget politeness to you, Madam! replied she, turning her back upon me to go to her closet; truly this is a terrible reproach; and I should certainly be in despair if I deserved it. As to the respect which is due to you, I hope the public you threaten me with, won't be altogether so very difficult in that point as yourself! Exasperated at this insolent reply, I complained of it to my son; and had not any reason to be better satisfied with him than I was with his wife. He laughed at our quarrel, said it was a mere womanish debate, which we should both forget the next day, and was what he ought not to meddle with. He had frequently heard her make merry
with

with the petty nobility of our province without being offended, and ridiculously pleased with the justice she did her father's extraction, he readily gave up mine to her pleasantry; perhaps he despised it himself, and did not think it any honour to him. What extravagant conceit, what wild idea may not enter the head of a young man, whose mind is barren and uncultivated! what weakness and folly is not such a person capable of! Thus forsaken by my son, and scorned by my daughter-in-law, who always treated me with contempt and insolence, I became the laughing-stock of the family, and was soon treated with a disrespectful neglect by the very servants; on which I resolved to leave the house, which I accordingly did one morning when my son was gone a hunting, leaving a letter behind me, in which I informed him of my reasons for retiring, and at the same time desiring him to pay me two quarters of my pension, which was become due, and of which I had not yet received any thing; and also to send me those goods I had reserved for myself. The next day he came to see me, in which he endeavoured to persuade me to return, by saying that my leaving him was only the effect of an ill humour which had no foundation; all the grievances, mentioned in my letter, he treated as mere trifles that did not deserve my notice; and told me that I ought not to make myself appear the most proud and opiniated woman, whom it was impossible to live with; with many other arguments as little adapted to persuade. The result of this visit was, that he promised to send me the money I wanted, with all the goods which belonged to me; which however were changed for such as were of small value; and were almost of no service to me, when a little after I was obliged to sell them for my subsistence. I re-

ceived but the third part of the sum which was become due, and my pension continued to be so ill paid, that I was obliged to part with this faithful servant, leave my apartment, and pass from one ready furnished lodging to another, according to my want of ability to satisfy the demands of the persons of whom I hired them. I was in this situation, when the widow of an officer for whom I had done an important piece of service, offered to take me for some months to her country-seat; there I fell sick, and notwithstanding the kind assistance of this lady, who was more generous than rich, I spent almost all the money I had brought with me. When I was a little recovered, I resolved to return to Paris to see my son, with a resolution to have recourse to the law, if his inhumanity should oblige me to it. The widow's country seat was but about half a mile from the place where the stage-coach used to stop. I walked thither, and there I found Mrs. Darcie and thee. Happy meeting! there I began to feel a friendship for thee, which owed its rise to thy merit; a friendship so soft, as made me wish we had been allied by the ties of blood, and which was perhaps inspired by some secret sympathy. What reason have I to reproach myself for my barbarity to thee! How unkind a mother, and how tender a child! As I was loth to give you the pain of seeing a woman of quality in distress, I changed my name, and took another that hindered thee from knowing me. This, my dear, is all that is necessary for me to tell you.

I COULD not help being shocked, my dear Marianne, at my brother's ingratitude. About eight days after this Mrs. Darcie and I resolved to pay him a visit; and that we might not miss him, we took care to be at his house between one and two; but we were not destined to find him so soon;

soon; the Marchioness was come to town without him, and did not expect him till the next day. However we resolved to see her, and immediately went up, after having sent a servant to tell her that Miss de Terviere and another lady were coming up stairs, when we heard her say that she did not know us. We found a pretty numerous company with her, who probably were to stay dinner; she advanced towards me as I entered the room with an air that seemed to say, what would she have with me? whilst I was not at all dazzled with the rank she bore at Paris and at court, nor with her titles, or the grandure of her house, as I only looked upon her as my sister-in-law. As I had sent up my name, which I fancied she had at last heard of, since it had been that of her mother-in-law, I went to her in a free but polite manner to embrace her; when I observed that she hesitated as if in doubt whether she ought to suffer me to take that liberty: however she could not refuse returning my politeness, tho' she did it with a visible constraint, and a remarkable air of indifference. We are nicely sensible, my dear Marianne, of this sort of behaviour; for our own pride sufficiently acquaints us with that of others. Madam, said I, I judge from the surprize you seem to be in, that my name was not faithfully brought in to you; you cannot be a stranger to it, I am called Terviere. She continued to look at me without making me any reply, and this I took to be another of her haughty airs, when I added at last I am the Marquis's sister. I am very sorry, Miss, he is not here, replied she, desiring us to sit down; he will not be in town these two days. I was told so, Madam, returned I; but my visit is not to him alone, I came also to have the honour of seeing you. (It was not without the greatest reluctance, that I made her this compli-

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ment;

ment; but we must sometimes be civil for our own sakes, tho' very often those we speak to do not deserve we should be so for their's.) Besides, continued I, I am come about an affair that will not admit of delay, and which highly concerns my brother and myself, and even you too, since it relates to my mother. She don't usually address herself to me about her affairs, replied she smiling, and I believe, Miss, you had better stay till the Marquis's return. Her indifference on this subject made me angry, and as I observed the company seemed curious of hearing the sequel of our conversation, I immediately resolved to punish the Marchioness, for her little concern for my mother, by entering into particulars which could not be very agreeable to her. Madam, said I, my mother's affairs are very plain and easily understood; she only asks for money, and you are sensible she can't do without. I have just told you, said she, that you must talk about it to the Marquis, for I never meddle with their agreement upon that subject. But, Madam, resumed I, turning away my head as well as she, this agreement consists only in acquitting a pension, the payment of which has been neglected for almost a year past; and you may without the least inconvenience, interest yourself in the troubles of a mother-in-law, who has loved you to such a degree as to consent to give you all she was possessed of. I have been told that she received from the late Marquis all she ever gave you, replied she with a sneer; and I can't think myself obliged to thank your mother for her son's being his father's heir. Let me put you in mind, Madam, that that mother is now also called your's as well as mine, returned I; you speak of her as a stranger, or a person to whom you are sorry for being related.——Who told you I was

sorry

sorry for it, Miss, said she? what good would that do me? would my sorrow make her the less my mother-in-law? I know she is so, since the Marquis was pleased to make her the mother of his son. Sure, Madam, you have not well considered what you are saying, replied I, looking at her with a kind of pity; what do you mean by reproaching the old Marquis with marrying my mother? if he had not, I presume, his son would never have existed, and therefore could not have been now your husband; is he dear to you, and can you wish he had never been born? but I believe you only wish his mother had been of a more noble family than she is. If this is the case, you have no reason to disturb yourself; your pride need not be alarmed; for tho' the Marquis was superior to her in fortune, he was not in birth, and therefore did not dishonour himself in marrying her; and this the whole province will tell you. I am surprised that my brother has not let you know it. Therefore, Madam, added I, without giving her time to reply, you may safely and without blushing own her for your mother-in-law, nor need you be ashamed of paying her all that duty which is due from a daughter, which I am sorry to say you have hitherto refused her. Repair the injustice of your former disdain, which must have displeased every witness of it, and which indeed would have been very unjust, had she been of much meaner extraction than you have imagined; entertain, with regard to her, sentiments worthy of yourself, of your education and good disposition, and make a proper return for the extraordinary testimonies she has given you of her tenderness, by that confidence with which she has relied upon you and her son, for all the support and happiness of her remaining life.—— Truly you would make

excellent sermons, cried she, rising with an air, which she strove to render careless and unconcerned: I would freely listen till the conclusion of it; but we have been just told that dinner is ready: do you dine with us, ladies? No, Madam; I give you thanks, replied I rising too, with an air of indignation, I have but one word to add to what you call my sermon. My mother who has reserved nothing to herself, and whom you both have abandoned to the most frightful extremities; who has been forced to sell the pitiful goods you sent her in the room of those she had reserved to herself: in short, that mother who could not believe that either you or her son would ever want gratitude; who has consented to give up a very handsome settlement in consideration of a very small pension you were to pay her, thro' the too favourable opinion she had entertained of his heart and yours; she whom you invited to live with you at your house, to be loved, served and respected there as she deserved; whom on the contrary you have treated with scorn and insult, and abused to such a degree as to force her to leave you, and to live on a small pension which you have neglected to pay, and which was too trifling for her ever to look upon as a resource, though it is now the only one that is left her; that unfortunate mother-in-law, whose interest gives you so little concern, I now come to tell you, was a few days ago in the utmost distress, and was so dreadfully reduced as not to know where to apply for shelter, and bare subsistence; she is sick, and lodges at a mean inn, where she has only a small dark room, which she could not pay for, and out of which she would have been turned, tho' almost expiring, into the street, had she not been relieved by the charity of a woman who was passing by, and to whom she was

was entirely unknown: I say *charity*, for however harsh the term may sound, it is impossible to use a softer expression consistent with truth.

You can't imagine, Marianne, what an effect this word had upon those who were present, tho' it would probably have wounded their nice ears, and have appeared too indelicate, had I not thought that in order to divest it of its baseness, and render it touching, I ought to lay a stress upon it, and appear to surmount with pain the confusion it gave me: I saw them all lift up their hands, and by several gestures express their surprise and concern. Yes, Madam, continued I, in this frightful situation was your mother-in-law! this her dreadful condition! her linen and cloaths were ready to be sold, or at least kept for a security, when the lady I am speaking of, touched with compassion, redeemed them, even without knowing her, or hoping to be paid again. She is still in the same inn, from whence her illness will not yet permit her to be carried. That inn is in such a street, and at such a sign. Consult now with yourself, consult with these gentlemen your friends; for there needs no other judges between you and your mother-in-law, and see if you can have still the courage to say, that you will not concern yourself with her affairs. Here is a letter which she writes to my brother, and I leave it with you.

HERE I took my leave, perfectly dissatisfied with my sister's behaviour. During this latter part of my discourse I observed that she coloured, and seemed agitated with shame and indignation, at having her inhumanity made so public. But her friends could not conceal their astonishment and concern; and Mrs. Darcie, as soon as we were in her coach, let me know that she was very much
pleased

pleased with my talking with so much spirit. Your sister-in-law is a monster, said she; to what an extravagant excess does her pitiful pride carry her! I find you have little to hope for from persons so insensible; for they who can be guilty of such vile ingratitude, may well be suspected to want every sentiment of humanity. When we returned to the inn, we found my mother expecting us with the greatest impatience; but she did not seem at all surprized at our reception, or at the young Marchioness's haughty behaviour. If my son, said she, whom I have loved with such an unbounded affection, can abandon me, why should I wonder that his wife should do so too? it is I that am to blame more than they; perhaps, had I taken care to have had his mind opened and enlarged by useful knowlege, had he been early inspired with a love of wisdom, and a generous concern for the happiness of mankind, he would have been incapable of treating me as he has done! Oh! what reason have I to reproach myself! — Two or three days after this, the Marquis sent my mother a note for a little money, and in his letter complained that I had treated his wife with disrespect, exposed him before company, and at the same time desired her to let him hear no more of her clamorous complaints, unless she would speak to him in private; and that as for me he did not desire to see me. My mother began now to be something better, and we no sooner found her well enough to be removed, than we had her carried to our lodging, where we had room enough, and were surrounded with a great many conveniencies which we wanted in the inn; but her palsy still continued, and notwithstanding she had all the advice that could be procured, we began to despair of her ever being perfectly recovered. But to keep

keep up my spirits under this melancholy circumstance, I received a letter from Mrs. du Frainville, in which was inclosed another from Mr. Durfan, full of the most tender and pleasing sentiments ; I found an inexpressible satisfaction in hearing from my absent lover ; his recovery from his illness gave me the utmost joy, and I flattered myself that we should carry on a most agreeable correspondence. After this he wrote to me almost every post ; I received his letters with transport ; read them over a thousand times, and as often kissed the dear characters, which conveyed to me the most delightful ideas ; our absence seemed to increase our mutual passion ; it gave me an opportunity of describing the situation of my heart, with greater freedom than I should ever have ventured to have done in conversation ; but this was a felicity too exquisite to last long ; his letters insensibly grew more gay and sprightly than became a passionate absent lover. This I thought only proceeded from the frankness with which I laid open my soul to him. He loves me, said I, and he knows how tenderly I make him a return ; then why should he complain ? this discovery makes him think himself happy, and as he has nothing to fear from my absence, he endeavours by being cheerful to render it less insupportable to us both. But alas ! I was soon undeceived ; his gaiety increased to such a degree, that his letters at last contained nothing but a trifling ceremonious respect. My mother, mean while grew so fond of me, that she could hardly bear me out of her sight ; she seemed to have transferred all her affection from her son to me, and upon every occasion reproached herself for her unkindness, in a manner as severe as tender. My brother still used her with the same neglect, and withheld from her what she had a right to demand

demand from him. As I had reason to be prejudiced against him, on account of his inhumanity to the most indulgent parent, I never desired to see him; but in order to support my mother and pay all her debts I retrenched my expences, and lived as happily with her as her ill state of health would permit. I was pleased with having it in my power to maintain her elegantly, and therefore did not care to apply to the law to recover her just claims from an ungrateful son; tho' Mrs. Darcie used many arguments to persuade me to it. That lady at last returned into the country, and I had not lived in this manner above four months, when my mother had a return of her fever, which in a few days carried her off. How severe was my grief! I had just found a mother: just tasted the satisfaction of loving her, when I was at once deprived of her and all my comfort. What an irreparable loss! how painful, how cruel!——Forgive me, my dear Marianne, cried she, interrupting herself at seeing the tears gush from my eyes, for reminding you of the loss of your dear mamma, Mrs. de Valville; I will pass over this painful event; but first dry up your tears, they are both happy, and perhaps delighted to hear of our sincere friendship. I then embraced her, and she proceeded.

My mother being dead, I sent to invite the Marquis her son with his lady to the funeral: but they were in the country; which I was not sorry for, as I imagined the levity of these persons so nearly related to her, would encrease my affliction and make it exceed all bounds. And as I was no friend to that ridiculous pageantry with which we celebrate the funerals of the Great; I contented myself with having her interred in a private, tho' decent, manner.

I HAD hitherto lived at Paris in as retired a manner as if I had been in the country; for my only satisfaction had been in attending my mother, so that I had made but few friends; and therefore to divert my melancholy, I went abroad, and visited some ladies that I had but a very slender acquaintance with before, one of whom I took a particular fancy for, it was the officer's widow who took my mother into the country; she happened now to be at Paris, and was one of those I had invited to her funeral. Her gratitude to my mother in her distress for the service she had done her in her prosperity, was the first motive which induced me to chuse her for my friend; and a little knowledge of her personal merit, made me soon look upon her as a very valuable woman. She was a plain good woman, of a moderate capacity, but then she had a great deal of sincerity; she always spoke as she thought, and scorned to do a base or a mean action, and was so pious that I wonder she did not end her days in a cloister. This person I made my confidant; for I always preferred a great stock of virtue to every other accomplishment. As my cousin Duran found that the law would not give her an opportunity of shewing her ingratitude to the world, by depriving me of my subsistence, she took a more effectual method to render me unhappy; she constantly sent me what money I had a claim to; her son had not wrote to me for some time, and I began to fear she had prevailed upon him to banish me from his heart. I knew the ascendant she had over him, and looked upon this piece of treachery, as the greatest evil that could ever befall me. It was like a dagger to my heart; and this apprehension together with his silence, continually gave me the most painful inquietudes. But, my dear Marianne, how can I describe

describe my astonishment, grief and confusion when I received two letters at the same time, one from Mrs. du Frainville, and the other from Mrs. Darcie, which told me that Dursan's mother had prevailed upon him to marry a young lady of great fortune, who had been one of my acquaintance! You, my dear, have experienced the same deplorable situation of mind, and by referring to your own breast can recollect the same distress, the same torment. My friend the officer's widow used those arguments to me, which I did to comfort you under Mr. de Valville's infidelity; and I at last was calmed by their force; but began to be so disgusted with mankind, that I resolved to exclude myself from their society for ever, by shutting myself up in a convent. The reasons which had deterred me before, now seemed weak and inconclusive. I considered the world as full of monsters of deceit and ingratitude; I thought it impossible for me ever to indulge a new passion, and was confident that I should enjoy a solid peace and tranquility in a society, where I could be no longer a witness to that falshood, which I had sufficiently experienced in the world. My friend approved of my resolution, and persuaded me to put it speedily in execution. This was the convent we fixed upon; I sold the third part of Mr. Dursan's estate which was my due; gave some legacies to the poor, and settled the rest upon this house before I took the veil. I entered upon my probation with the hopes that I should be completely happy in this peaceful asylum, and that I should here bury all my cares. The first year every thing seemed to conspire to make me pleased with my situation; the abbess and the nuns perpetually caressed me, and flattered my vanity by the grossest adulation. My beauty was a favourite subject of discourse; when I spoke, they extolled

extolled my wit with the most lavish praises ; when I smiled, they looked chearful ; and when I was dull they were melancholy. I was, they said, the life of the conversation, and made a considerable addition to their happiness. This behaviour was at first very disagreeable, and I wished for more plainness and sincerity ; but flattery easily insinuates itself into the minds of young people ; and before the year was expired, I began to think they were at least sincere in their professions, which was all that was necessary to make me love them and regard them as my friends ; but I had no sooner taken my vows, than the scene was changed ; I found that this was all artifice and deceit ; I was degraded from all my little honours. This disgusted me, and I no sooner found my error, than I reproached my false friends ; they laughed at me, ridiculed my sorrow, and applauded themselves for the cheat. Now the austerities of the place became burdensome to me ; I grew frightened at the slavery I was to undergo, found myself a prisoner for life, and therefore abandoned myself to the utmost despair. Instead of religion, I found nothing here but little intrigues, and all the ill humours which spring from strong passions restrained by violence ; and I assure you, that there is hardly a person amongst us, that would not sacrifice every thing to regain the dear liberty they once enjoyed.

THUS, my dear friend, I have given you the history of my adventures. You see that I have been very unhappy ; and I must now languish away the remainder of my miserable life in an irksome imprisonment, which the twenty years I have been accustomed to it, can hardly render tolerable.

MY dear friend, cried I, tenderly embracing the nun ; what a series of strange events ! how lovely do

do your sufferings make you appear! how closely do your shining virtues bind you to my heart! my dear, my amiable friend! I am shocked at the ingratitude of the world, and could not have imagined that it had been inhabited by such monsters; persons that are such a disgrace to human nature. But what have you heard of Mr. Durfan since his marriage? Nothing at all, returned she, but that he is to the last degree unhappy; he lives with his wife in a continual strife; I have been told that they are strangers to that union of soul, which is the bond of all felicity, and that they spend their lives in perpetual discord; but I have not heard any thing of them for many years.

I AM now, Madam, very weary, and shall therefore conclude this part. I intend in the next to send you the conclusion of my own adventures.

The End of the ELEVENTH PART.

THE
VIRTUOUS ORPHAN.

PART XII.

NOTHING, Madam, could be better adapted to sooth the melancholy turn of my mind, than my friend the nun's story; which received inexpressible charms, from her graceful manner of relating it. But you must not imagine that she had an opportunity of telling it me all at once; no, she was sometimes called off to attend the pious exercises of the house: but as nothing material happened in these intervening spaces, I rather chose to give it you altogether, than to interrupt her narration by little circumstances that had no relation to it.

I HAD been now in the convent five or six days, and was extremely afflicted to hear no news from my dear Valville and Mrs. Dorfin; when, as I was one morning in the garden, I heard at some distance one of the nun's mention a young lady's being in the parlour with one of the boarders, and by the description she gave of her, I thought it could be none but Miss du Bois. I was seized with an extraordinary joy at this discovery, even before I was certain that it was really her. I ran immediately
to

to the parlour, where indeed I found her just taking leave of one of the boarders. As she did not know that I was in that convent, she was extremely glad to see me, and as soon as the lady retired, broke into the warmest professions of friendship, whilst I should infallibly have flown into her arms, had I not been restrained by the grate. When our first transports were over, My dear friend, said she, what is the reason that you resolve to shut yourself up here? how can you think of withdrawing from your friends, and leaving Mr. de Valville in absolute despair? He, Mrs. Dorfin tells me, cannot support your absence; he is surprised at such a sudden resolution, and even Mrs. Dorfin herself is afflicted on your account, and would have seen you before this time, had she not been much indisposed by a cold, which obliges her to keep her room. Indeed, Miss, added she, you can't think how tenderly you are beloved! —

Ah! how much are you all deceived! cried I; I have not the least desire to be a nun, and have been very uneasy at being constrained to be here, contray to my inclinations. Why that is very surprizing, returned she; what reason then has the abbess to write such tender-letters to persuade them not to fetch you, in which she extols your piety, and says you are inclined to retire from the world? Mrs. Dorfin suspected that all was not right; for she could hardly believe, she said, that it was possible for you to be guilty of such levity, as to desire her to come for you the next day, and then to permit the abbess to forbid it. But as she could not suspect the good lady's veracity and probity, she was at a loss how to account for such an extraordinary procedure. Well, my dear, said I, it is now in your power to do me the greatest service by undeceiving them. Please to stay a moment,

ment, added I, while I write a line or two to Mr. de Valville; you don't know how my heart beats with joy, at the thought of being delivered from this dreadful captivity. On this I sat down, and wrote as follows.

S I R,

I DON'T know what you have thought of my confinement; if I am dear to you, I am sure it must give you the greatest pain. — This I know from what I feel in my own breast. Indeed I can't tell what the abbess has wrote to you and Mrs. Dorfin, that could prevent your coming for me at the time I appointed. She has heard that my dear mother has left me something considerable, and therefore would prevail upon me to settle it upon her convent; she would be glad to make a breach between us; take care that you are not imposed upon. I have inclosed a letter that she desired me to give you; she expected I should break it open, but she did not know me. I have too much respect for you, to desire to know what you perhaps would conceal from me. In short, I see thro' her artifice, and without your assistance shall be constrained to be miserable. Fly then, Sir, to save the distressed

MARIANNE.

P.S. Pray if possible bring Mrs. Dorfin with you.

As soon as I had sealed this letter, I gave it to Miss du Bois, and desired her to carry it immediately to Mr. de Valville; and then went to acquaint my friend the nun with what I had done; who was so good as to sympathize with me in my joy, tho' she told me she should be a sufferer by

my happiness, as I should deprive her of tasting the satisfactions of friendship. Here we tenderly embraced each other, and said all that the sincerest affection can dictate to two persons who are going to suffer the pain of separation. Mean while Miss du Bois went to Mr. de Valville's, but was there told that he was gone to see Mrs. Dorfin; she then went thither, and soon filled them both with a pleasing surprise. - Notwithstanding Mrs. Dorfin's indisposition, she resolved to accompany him, and in two hours time I had the satisfaction of being called for. As I entered the parlour I saw Valville, who immediately cast upon me a look of transport; which I returned with those lively glances, that spring from a mind raised from the depth of despair to the height of its wishes. O my dear, cried he in a tender tone, as soon as he saw me, have you never ceased to love me? is it true that you have not desired to snatch yourself from my embraces, by immuring yourself in this convent? thou dearest, thou best of women, continued he, may I still hope one day to call thee mine? what a sweet vicissitude of passions have you occasioned in my mind! two hours ago I was lamenting my wretchedness, and reproaching myself as being unworthy of tasting any real happiness, and was even lost in affliction and despair; but now I am only sensible to the most exquisite joy. Come, Sir, enough, enough, cried I, pray defer this rapture till I am safe from my prison; where is Mrs. Dorfin that I don't see her here? She is gone to speak to the abbess, and reprove her for imposing upon us, returned he; she will be soon back, and we will take you to her house. Here we were interrupted by a lay-sister, who came to tell me that the abbess desired to speak to me. On which I went to her immediately, and found her

her with Mrs. Dorfin, who seemed to be in a heat, as if she had been talking severely to the old lady. My dear child, said the abbess, as soon as I entered the room, this lady and I have had a little dispute about thee; I confess my tender affection for thee, and thy engaging behaviour, have made me strain a point of conscience, in order to keep thee with me; what would not one do to have the happiness of preserving such a lovely creature here, whose piety would be an ornament to my house? Ah! Miss, thou art sensible of my affection for thee, and I dare say wilt do me the justice to believe, I should not have presumed to have wrote those letters to this lady, hadst thou not seemed inclined to enter into this most holy state. I knew thy pious resolution, and was willing to give thee time to cherish it, by keeping thee a little longer with us. Doubtless, Madam, returned I, I must be infinitely obliged to you for your care of me, as well as of my small fortune; since, as you say, I should be infallibly miserable if I did not forsake the world; and that, by bestowing my fortune upon your house, I should certainly purchase everlasting felicity. If we may buy a place in heaven for such a trifle as two or three thousand livres a year, who would not bestow their money to such an advantage? This was spoke with an air that made Mrs. Dorfin smile; she seemed pleased at my gentle tho' severe reproof, while the abbess cast down her eyes; when I added, especially, Madam, as my dear mamma was so extremely solicitous about my taking the veil. That I never heard of before, cried Mrs. Dorfin; it is the last thing I should have thought of. How, Madam, cried she, addressing herself to the abbess, could you assert such a notorious falsehood? Here she sat for some time silent, with a visible confusion in her looks, and then list-

ing up her eyes, I am sorry, child, said she at last, that you put such an unkind construction upon the little artifice I have made use of to keep you amongst us, as to insinuate that it sprang from any other motive than a sincere affection for thee. Thou wilt ever be dear to me, and I will pray for thy happiness as long as I live. Farewel, child, I will go, and order your box to be brought down. Your servant, added she to Mrs. Dorfin. Here she left us in a manner that shewed she was glad to break off this conversation. Mrs. Dorfin and I went back to the parlour, where I took my leave of the nuns. Mrs. Terviere, my friend, I found waiting for me in the passage; she embraced me with tears, and I confess I felt a great deal of pain at separating myself from this lady. I then embraced the rest of the nuns and boarders, who flocked about me, and my box being placed in the coach, Mrs. Dorfin, my dear Valville and I drove away.

As soon as we were in the coach, Valville pulled a letter out of his pocket, and giving me a look which spoke a thousand tender things, Dear Miss, said he, I cannot help applauding your discretion in not breaking open this letter; I confess I wrote it some time ago to Miss Varthon, and she without doubt dropt it in her hurry of going away; but they have altered the date, that you might imagine it was sent to her after she left the convent, in order, I suppose, to make you think I still carry on a correspondence with her. We then diverted ourselves a little with the abbess's pious zeal for my happiness, which had such extraordinary effects; whilst Valville seemed extremely pleased at the just confusion we had given her, in letting her know that we could see thro' her hypocritical pretences. When we arrived at Mrs. Dorfin's,

Dorlin's, we found Miss du Bois waiting for our return, in company with our good friend the officer, who very politely complimented me on my being set at liberty; for that young lady had given him an account of the abbess's plot. I then went to Miss du Bois, and returned her civilities on this occasion, by giving her the most sincere thanks for the share she had in procuring my enlargement. I, in some sense, looked upon her as my deliverer, and methought I felt a peculiar pleasure in regarding her in this light, as it seemed as if heaven rewarded me for relieving her from her distress, by making her relieve me from mine. This thought not only filled me with inward satisfaction and complacency, but diffused thro' my mind a kind of pious delight, which tho' calm and secret, yet was nevertheless exquisitely sweet and delightful.

I NOW lived with Mrs. Dorlin in a manner that shewed the great esteem that lady had for me; she took a peculiar pleasure in my company, and I enjoyed with her all the advantages which spring from the sincerest friendship; she treated me with the same respect and freedom as my mamma had done; and the servants, in all their actions, shewed they modelled themselves according to their mistress's behaviour. Mr. de Valville came almost every day to see me, and seldom unaccompanied by my friend the officer, a nobleman for whom I had an esteem, mixed with a surprizing veneration and regard. Their conversation was always lively and entertaining, tho' we sometimes discoursed on the most serious subjects, which were handled in a manner that gave us a satisfaction and delight infinitely superior to that of laughter.

ONE day Mrs. Dorfin led us into her library, which was composed of a very curious collection of all those pieces in our language, which are able to improve judgment, or inform and entertain the mind. Here I had already spent many agreeable hours. Valville and the officer complimented Mrs. Dorfin on the justness of her taste, in her choice of the most solid and polite authors, and expressed the most lively satisfaction, at seeing her possessed of such an inestimable treasure. I made some reflections on the sentiments of some of the pieces I had read, and was going on with my remarks, when Mrs. Dorfin arose to bring us the book I was commending, in order to turn to a passage which I had been saying I was charmed with; but she happened to let it fall. I started up in a hurry of complaisance, to take it up for her, but in stooping broke my necklace, and the beads were immediately scattered about the room. As they were of pearl, and a present from my mamma, I set a value upon them proportionable to my tenderness for that dear lady, and we were immediately all employed in picking them up. When we had found them all, I desired Valville to give me something to put them in, when the officer hastily putting his hand into his pocket, presented me with a paper, which upon my going to receive, he drew back, put it again into his pocket, and gave me another; I beg your pardon, Miss, said he, this is the last letter I received from a dear brother, whom I have not seen these twenty years. A brother! cried Mrs. Dorfin, I thought you never had any but the Count de V——; but, Sir, can you persuade us to believe you set such a great value upon that paper, while you carry it so carelessly in your pocket, Yes, Madam, returned he, I was reading it this morning, when

a particular friend came into my parlour unperceived, and tapp'd me on the shoulder; I started, and being unwilling to disturb his gait by my serious reflections, slipped it into my pocket, and strove to divert my growing melancholy, which the thoughts of my brother had occasioned, by entering into conversation with him. But, Sir, returned Mrs. Dorfin, you say you have not seen your brother these twenty years; what sort of a person was he? has he been abroad all this while, or is he since dead? The brother, Madam, I am speaking of, said he, was in all respects a worthy man; his person was amiable, he had fine sense, improved by extensive learning; he had a heart perfectly generous and truly noble, and was an ornament to his country, as well as the delight of his friends. He married a most accomplished lady, and to give you her picture, you must look upon the amiable Marianne; for I assure you that there is something in her countenance, which greatly resembles my sister's, who was about her age when she was married; at which time I went into the army, and had been there two or three years, when he sent me this letter to inform me that somebody had rendered him suspected to the government of carrying on a correspondence with the enemy, and that he designed to retire with his wife and daughter, a lovely little creature, till his innocence could be cleared up. Since this time, I have never been able to learn in what country he chose to reside, or even whether he be yet living; so that my other brother has taken the possession of his estate and title, which he now enjoys. I heard this story with a great deal of emotion, but had not the confidence to enquire more minutely into the circumstances of this fact; so that the conversation turned again upon books.

Many fine sentiments were taken notice of, and tho' nothing could be more charming than the remarks which were made upon them, I could not help sometimes glancing a thought at the officer's history of his brother; though I could give no account of the reason of my interesting myself in what apparently so little concerned me. - When they were gone I retired to my room, and considered again every circumstance of this story; my heart fluttered whenever I thought of his brother, and my bearing so near a resemblance to his sister. But as I thought it impossible to prove that I was the daughter he mentioned, tho' I should really be so, I resolved to conceal my conjectures, since I had so little foundation for them, and not to acquaint Mrs. Dorfin with my thoughts, lest she should be displeased at my vanity. How unaccountable are the strange impressions, which even trifling circumstances raise in the mind! sure some happy, some kind spirits, some angelic beings have a communication with our thoughts, and point out the way to our felicity.

I HAD now been about six months at Mrs. Dorfin's, in which time I sometimes went with her, to pass a day or two together, at the country-seat which Mrs. de Valville had given me. Every thing now conspired to make me happy; Valville pressed me daily to consent to have our marriage celebrated, but I still found some excuses to defer it. But the time now hastened when I was to taste the unutterable satisfaction of knowing those whom nature has given us strong propensions to love and revere. I think, I told you, Madam, that I brought with me to Paris, the little clothes I was dressed in, when discovered in the stage-coach in the arms of the murdered lady. These I had taken out of my box, and put them into my chest

chest of drawers at Mrs. Dorfin's; one day that lady going up stairs for something she wanted, I gave her my keys, and desired her to look in my drawers for my work, when she cast her eyes upon those pieces of my early finery, and brought them down stairs with her. What have you got here? said she, as she returned, here is something extremely pretty. This silk, tho' it is old-fashioned, is some of the richest I ever saw. She then observed my head-dress, and admired the fineness of the lace, and the beauty of the needle-work. Is this the dress you was found in, my dear? said she: I think I heard you had brought it with you, and I wonder we had none of us the curiosity to see it before. Yes, Madam, said I; Mrs. de Rosand made me bring it with me to town, but for what reason I cannot tell, unless it was to be a proof that I am not of mean extraction. That lady was very prudent, returned she; this is a dress fit for a princess. She then observed a cypher curiously worked in one of the seams, and then smiling upon me, I don't know, added she, but this may one day bring you to the knowledge of your family; when Valville's friends, who now look upon you with contempt, will perhaps find themselves greatly honoured by your alliance. This is a very pleasing thought, said I, but was I of the blood-royal, I had rather continue thus ignorant of the grandeur of my birth, than be obliged to forsake my dear Valville; for the highest honours would not make life tolerable to me without him; whatever are my family or circumstances, my highest felicity will be that of being his; he, who could stoop to marry me a foundling and an orphan, unknown to the world, and in the lowest indigence, would deserve me, tho' I were born to wear a crown; but why do you talk so, Madam,

Continued I, is it possible that you can, from these trifles, give me any light into my family? I don't know, said she; but I must see your good friend the officer; and perhaps by his means we may learn something, that won't be disagreeable to you to know. The officer! Madam, replied I blushing, do you think he can give us any information? how I should rejoice to find myself allied to that worthy man! a person for whom I have never ceased to have the highest esteem! but, when shall we see him, Madam? I will send to him directly, said she, and desire his company at supper. I am as impatient to see him as thou canst be; come, don't look thoughtful, if I am mistaken in my conjectures, we are only where we were.

You can form no idea, Madam, of the excess of my joy on this occasion; I compared the impression the officer's story of his brother made in my mind, and the probability that I was his daughter, since I so nearly resembled his lady; I compared these circumstances, I say, with Mrs. Dorlin's persuasion, that our military friend could unravel this event, and did not doubt but she had some reasons for her opinion, which she was willing to conceal. Full of these thoughts, I made an excuse to retire to my room, that I might be at leisure to indulge my reflections. Are my misfortunes then at an end? cried I; shall I taste the delights that result from indulging those social affections, which make up such a large part of human felicity? shall I have a family and a name? shall I have relations that will be dear to me, tho' now unknown? what a fund of new and unexpected delight! O my dear Valville! shall I have it in my power to convince the world, that it is no mercenary views, but the purest, the sincerest, the most tender affection, which has possessed my soul,
and

and makes me consent to be thine. Here a gush of tears forced their way, and I melted into the most charming softness. O my dear mother, then cried I, you have been censured for loving me; and the permitting your son to do so, has been regarded as the greatest weakness; now your conduct will be approved, and your unkind relations will blush at their insolence. I shall hear your name mentioned with honour, by those who have been most invidious, most ready to defame it by their unkind censures.——But perhaps, cried I recollecting myself, and drying my eyes, all this joyful prospect may at last prove a vain chimera, and every flattering hope vanish as soon as the officer appears. There may be certain reasons to prove that I am not his brother's daughter; and should we have arguments forcible enough to satisfy ourselves, yet we may want sufficient proof to convince those whose interest it is to disbelieve us; my birth may at best be only doubtful, and I may never have it in my power to convince the world of the sincerity of my tenderness, or give Valville any proof of the dignity of my passion, by offering him a fortune perhaps as large as his own.

THUS I went on wavering betwixt my hopes and fears; sometimes delighting myself with the most pleasing prospects, and then afflicting myself at the apprehensions of a disappointment. At last Mrs. Dorfin, a little surprized at my being so long alone, sent a servant to tell me she begged the favour of my company: when I went down, she desired to know what it was that had disturbed me; for she saw some traces of the trouble of my thoughts in my countenance, on which I ingenuously opened my heart to her, without concealing the least article of my uneasiness. I can't bear to see you so concerned, said she, about the event of our

enquiry ; is it any great matter whether you oblige Mr. de Valville, or he you ? Our military friend has sent word he will be with us presently ; and I have one piece of advice to give you, to take no notice of what we are about to your lover ; it will be time enough to mention it to him when we can do it with a grace. I am entirely of your opinion, Madam, returned I ; Valville shall be ignorant of our thoughts till a discovery of them may contribute to his happiness. Here somebody knocked at the door, at which my heart began to flutter afresh : Now, said I to myself, this important moment approaches ! Oh ! that this painful suspense was over ! The officer presently entered the room, and saluted us with an air of unusual gaiety. I am very much obliged to you ladies, said he, for the honour you confer upon me. It is we that are obliged, Sir, said Mrs. Dorfin ; we wanted to consult with you about an affair of consequence ; and to prevent our being interrupted by company, we will lose no time but enter upon it immediately. I have by me some clothes which belonged to an infant, and I want your opinion of them ; pray take notice of this head-dress ; nay,——Sir, don't smile, added she, before you have heard me. Indeed, Madam, returned he, I have no judgment in such things. That may be, Sir, replied she, but I want you carefully to examine some cyphers, curiously worked in this seam, perhaps they may give us some light into a certain young lady's family. He then took it in his hand, and Mrs. Dorfin explained the letters to him, whilst I trembled, and was in the utmost pain for the event. After he had observed it for some time, he gave a sigh, and looking at Mrs. Dorfin and me, with an air that shewed some emotion, may I see the lady, said he ?——You do see her, said Mrs. Dorfin,

it is Marianne ; these are the things she was found in when taken out of the stage-coach. O my dear Marianne, cried he, rising with his eyes full of tenderness, I must instantly endeavour to unravel this affair, you are perhaps my niece. I see here the initial letters of her name, and here, said he, pointing to another place, are those of my brother and sister that I have so long lost. Permit me to embrace you, I will ride post instantly to the Count my brother ; he is now at Versailles, and as he lived at Paris when my brother retired from hence, perhaps he, or my mother who lives with him, may remember all the particulars of this dress, and if you will give me leave I will take it with me. Pray do, Sir, said I. He then tenderly embraced me, and parted with his eyes full of a manly softness.

As soon as he was gone I burst into tears. My dear Mrs. Dorfin, cried I, throwing my arms about her neck, I shall be happy beyond my utmost wishes.——My God ! what felicity dost thou prepare for me !——what gratitude is due to thee ! may I never forget thy goodness !——O Madam ! my dear friend ! what a happy turn this will give to my affairs ! Valville will be no more reproached with loving an object unworthy of his affection ! My dear, said she, weeping too, and holding me in her arms, I heartily sympathize with thee in thy satisfaction ; but let us still conceal it from the world ; take care you don't let Mr. de Valville know it. We will surprize him with the news all at once, when we have heard the success of your uncle's journey. I agree to it, Madam, returned I ; but how agreeable the discovery will be to him ! I can't help anticipating the satisfaction he will feel on this occasion.

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As Valville, by some means or other, was prevented from paying me a visit this evening, I had time, against the next day, to confirm myself in my resolution of concealing for some time the discovery which was breaking out, and arm myself with such an equanimity of temper, as to make it impossible to disclose any thing from my behaviour. As he had not been with me the day before, he came two or three hours sooner than usual, and was at Mrs. Dorfin's even before dinner. As soon as we were alone, he appeared impatient at my delays in deferring the completion of our mutual happiness, and pressed me to fix upon the day which was to make me his, in such an engaging manner, that he prevailed upon me to be more hasty than I intended, and I consented that I would be his wife in six weeks time. Tho' he was pleased with this promise, as I could easily see by his countenance, which discovered an unusual satisfaction; yet he endeavoured to make me shorten that time, by every argument which he thought could prevail upon me. And why six weeks, my dear Marianne, said he? taking my hand and pressing it between his: can you love me, and yet desire to torment me with needless delays? Sure your tenderness must be greatly inferior to me. Did you know how painful it is to me to be absent from you; did you know with what reluctance I am forced to leave you when I have been blessed with your company, and with what impatience I wait till I can see you again, I am sure you would pity me, and hasten my felicity. But alas! my follies have justly rendered me less dear to you than I have been, and it would be unreasonable in me, after so much ingratitude, to expect an equal return of affection. Here he stopped, and gave me such a look, as touched my very soul. Indeed, Sir, re-
turned

turned I, you don't do me justice; you have no reason to accuse me of cruelty; and perhaps I might with the strictest truth assure you, that my tenderness is not at all inferior to yours; how then is it possible that I should take a pleasure in giving you pain? you ought rather to conclude that I have some reasons for deferring the completion of our happiness, and I assure you, they are such as even you will approve of. While we were talking thus, Mrs. Dorfin entered the room, on which we changed the subject of our conversation, and talked of indifferent matters, till it was time for Valville to retire.

THE next day in the afternoon, as I was reading in the library, Mrs. Dorfin came to me with an air that expressed the most lively satisfaction. My dear, said she smiling, what will you give me for a letter from our friend the officer, whom I must now call your uncle? I have just received one from him, with another inclosed for you. Here, Miss, added she, are both. I took them, and opened Mrs. Dorfin's letter, which, as near as I can remember, was to this effect.

“IMPATIENT, Madam, to be certain of my
“happiness, in being related to the amiable
“Marianne, I have endeavoured, ever since I left
“you, to gain all possible information, and not
“without success. As soon as I arrived at my
“brother's, I went to wait upon my mother the
“Countess dowager, who was a little indisposed
“in her chamber. There I found my sister and
“several other ladies of distinction. I took the
“first opportunity to shew them the cap I re-
“ceived from you, which I pretended I had found
“upon the road. I gave it my mother; she
“looked at it for some time, and then taking off
“her

“ her spectacles, and lifting up her eyes, I saw
 “ them swimming in tears. My poor child!
 “ said she; alas! what is become of thee! ——
 “ What you have found, said she to me, puts
 “ me in mind of your brother and sister; and
 “ then turning to a lady who sat by her, This,
 “ Madam, continued she, is extremely like the
 “ cap you made a present of to my granddaugh-
 “ ter. The lady then took it, and had no sooner
 “ cast her eyes upon it, than she cried out with
 “ astonishment, it is the same. —— I perfectly
 “ remember it, for I made it myself. —— What
 “ is become of my dear friend the countess? may
 “ I never flatter myself with the hopes of seeing
 “ her again? She then asked me where I found
 “ it, on which, I related in a few words Ma-
 “ rianne’s history. My mother wept at the loss
 “ of her son and daughter, at the same time that
 “ she rejoiced at the thought of seeing again her
 “ granddaughter, and was ravished at the idea
 “ of finding her a lady of such merit, as I justly
 “ represented her. Mean while all the ladies
 “ appeared in the greatest amazement, but my
 “ sister held down her head, seemed displeased
 “ at the discovery, and made some objections
 “ to Miss Marianne’s being her niece; which
 “ however were soon answered. My brother
 “ says, he will joyfully resign the estate which is
 “ her due, as soon as her right to it can be proved.
 “ —— I am now on the road to Bourdeaux, and
 “ but a few miles from the village, at which my
 “ dear niece received her education. I am,

“ Madam,

“ Yours, &c.

“ J. de N——.”

THE other letter, of which I have still the copy, was exactly as follows.

“ DEAR MISS,

“ I T would be in vain for me to pretend to describe the joy I feel at the reflection of being so nearly related to a person, whose shining virtues would give a lustre to the highest stations in life, and make nobility truly noble.——
“ I have offered you my heart, and have loved you with all the tenderness of a passionate lover ; but you no sooner crushed my hopes of being yours, than I gave laws to my desires, and aspired to deserve the character of a sincere, honest and disinterested friend. To that dear name I have now another claim——that of blood: but this can add nothing to my zeal for your happiness, which ever since I knew you, was dearer to me than my own. Believe me, dear Miss, I interest myself in all that concerns you ; I share in your felicity, and wish you and Mr. de Valville, all the satisfaction that virtue, innocence and love can bestow. In a few days I shall see you again, when I shall have an opportunity of telling you, how much I am,

“ My dear niece,

“ Your affectionate friend,

“ J. de N——.”

You imagine perhaps, Madam, that I was now transported with the utmost joy, that I gave a loose to my transports; since the distant prospect of this happiness had given me such delight. So far from it, I read these letters with great calmness,

ness, undisturbed by any violent emotion. They contained nothing very surprizing; nothing that I was not already prepared for; reflection had made the thoughts of these new honours familiar to my mind, and they insensibly grew less charming, as I was more accustomed to them.

WELL, my Dear, said Mrs. Dorfin laughing, as soon as I had finished reading these two letters, don't you think the officer, (your uncle I should say) is grown very gallant. He writes as passionately as a young lover, at the same time that he preserves the tenderness of a father. Such a man ought to be esteemed as an invaluable blessing. 'Tis true, Madam, replied I, my being related to a person of such merit, is not the least advantage I shall derive from this discovery; and I shall set a greater value upon his friendship, than upon my father's estate which I shall obtain thro' his means. He is not only my friend, but my dear Valville's too. Such a noble, such a disinterested friend, is one of the greatest blessings of life. He will be at the same time an uncle, a father, and a brother to me. You are in the right, returned Mrs. Dorfin, how assiduous he is in promoting your happiness! what pains does he take to clear up the obscurity of your birth, and recover you from the oblivion into which your first misfortunes have involved you! with what diligence does he endeavour to raise you to those honours you were born to enjoy, and to procure you the possession of an estate, which might fall to him after his brother's decease! Happy the persons who have such a friend; but doubly happy they who know how to prize him as they ought!

Two or three days after this, Mrs. Dorfin asked Valville and I to go with her to pay a visit to

a lady of her acquaintance, that lived at a village a few leagues from Paris ; we readily accepted the offer, and set out as soon as we had dined. We were received with a great deal of politeness by an elderly gentleman and lady, and upon Mrs. Dorfin's presenting us both to them, as two of her dearest friends, who were shortly to be married, we were caressed in a very engaging manner. We think ourselves extremely obliged to you, Madam, said the old gentleman, for the honour you do us, of giving us an opportunity of knowing those who are worthy of your esteem. I think I have somewhere seen these two amiable persons. Yes, Sir, replied Mrs. Dorfin, Miss Marianne was once at my house with this gentleman and his mother, when you entered just as they were taking their leave of me. I suppose you might see them then. They are both of very noble families, and I assure you I think myself greatly honoured in the share I flatter myself I have in their affections. But where are your son and the young ladies ? O Madam, said the old lady, they will be here presently. She had hardly spoke, when we saw a young gentleman pass by the window smacking his whip, calling his hounds, and in short making a most hideous noise. He presently after entered the room with a remarkable air of clownish rusticity ; he was booted and spurred, had a great coat on with a jockey's cap, and as soon as he appeared gave such a scrape with his foot, that I verily believe he left a mark a yard long. As soon as he took his seat, Mrs. Dorfin unhappily asked him, if he had had any sport. At which he began with his starting his game, and travelled again over all the ground where had been the scene of his morning's diversion ; related all the windings and doublings of the hare ; told us to whom

whom every field belonged thro' which he rode, and expatiated on the merit of his hounds; and all this interwoven with a thousand oaths and curses, till we were so weary with his tedious impertinence, that we were about to take our leave, as the only means of extricating ourselves from the trouble he gave us. But what most surprized us was to see his father and mother, who appeared to be persons of good sense, listening to him with an air that expressed the utmost satisfaction. Is it possible, said I to myself, that the tenderness of a parent should degenerate into such a criminal fondness, as to make them delight in the folly of their offspring? What an extravagant weakness for a reasonable mind to suffer itself to be so grossly blinded, as to mistake blemishes for beauties! what service can such a man be of to his friend or his country, who knows no gratification superior to following a hare or running down a fox, and who is in all respects as worthless an animal, as those who engross all his attention. We had sat an hour without any of us having an opportunity of putting in a word, and were rising when he stopped to take a little breath. I am glad, Sir, said Valville, that you have had such good diversion to day—— hunting is a noble exercise, and much conducive to health; but sure it ought not to be our supreme felicity. Sir, said the old gentleman, my boy is fond of the chace, and is one of the best huntsmen in the country; and when he begins upon these subjects, he is apt to be a little tedious, but I love to hear him talk of them; tho' I wish he did not swear so much. I wish so too, Sir, said I, these are only useless blanks in discourse, and if they had been left out, all that has been said would have been reduced into about half the compass; and I assure you, Sir, added I,

ad.

addressing myself to the young gentleman, I am almost angry that you should believe you have so little credit with us, as to think it necessary to swear to every trifling particular. But however a torrent of common place execrations may certainly be of great service to persons who have so mean a genius as to want such useless expletives to disguise their want of ideas, and hide their inability to furnish out a discourse without them; but pray, Sir, don't imagine I think you one of this number——Madam, I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, cried he, tho', faith, I hardly know what you mean by your *ablitives* and *ideots*. But I heard a rare story to day, father, of a gentleman at Paris who is main rich, and yet is such a fool as to think of marrying a pretty vagabond girl. Lord what sapsculls there are in the world! zoons, had he but half my sense, I know what I know!—— But ma'hap' you may know them, Madam, added he, addressing himself to Mrs. Dorfin. The young fellow's name is Valville; and the wench I speak of, I think they call Marianne.—— Here I saw Valville knit his brows, and look upon him with an air of contempt, whilst I could not help blushing; but my relation to the officer no sooner entered my thoughts, than I recovered myself from my confusion. What do you mean, Sir? cried Mrs. Dorfin interrupting him, Mr. de Valville is a gentleman who would have sense enough to despise your censure, were the young lady destitute of a fortune: but she is not so; I know her family; she is a person of quality, and is related to some of my most intimate friends; and Valville tho' of noble extraction, I assure you will be greatly honoured by the alliance. This was spoke with such an air of assurance, that Valville, who still knew nothing of the discovery of my birth,

birth, could not help smiling, and giving me a look which told me he approved of the deceit he thought Mrs. Dorfin put upon them. If my son has been misinformed, Madam, said the old lady, you must excuse him; I have heard something myself of the same story before, but as I did not know the persons concerned, I could not contradict it. There is little credit to be given to report. 'Tis true, Madam, returned Mrs. Dorfin; I assure you, they are both persons of merit, and are every way worthy of each other.

BUT I forgot to mention the two young ladies, who were persons of very different characters; they entered the room while their brother was in the midst of his tedious discourse, leaping ditches and five-barred gates. The youngest, who was about seventeen, seemed the favourite of her father and mother; was naturally genteel, and would have appeared quite charming, had not her whole behaviour been discoloured by the most ridiculous affectation and folly, which was so visible, as to destroy all the impressions which her beauty was apt to make upon those who saw her. She no sooner saluted us, but she sat down by her father, who gave her a look full of tenderness. She immediately began to endeavour to attract our eyes, and especially Valville's, by fluttering and gallanting her fan, and every moment changing her posture to discover some new charm. While her brother was talking, she had frequently an opportunity of shewing a fine set of teeth, by bursting into a ridiculous and immoderate laughter, then threw herself back in her chair, recovered herself and adjusted her tucker and head-dress, to discover a delicate round white arm; afterwards pulled out a gold snuff-box set with diamonds, and then
looked

looked at her watch. Her whole behaviour was forced and full of affectation, and it was this that made all her actions disagreeable; endeavouring too visibly to give a grace to every charm, her very endeavour rendered her less charming; and her too eager desire of pleasing, made her even disagreeable.

THE other lady was much older than her sister, had a complexion very ordinary, and was a little crooked; but had an air so easy, so sweet and engaging, that it more than made up for the want of those charms her sister was possessed of. She appeared to have a great degree of wit and good sense, but received none of those kind glances, which were continually bestowed upon her brother and sister, who seemed to engross the whole souls of their parents. While her looks seemed to discover the modest diffidence of a pure and virtuous mind, depressed and labouring under insuperable difficulties; and it was easy to perceive, that as a criminal indulgence had spoiled the others, a contrary behaviour to her had made her ambitious of excelling them in real excellence, as much as they did her in the advantage of their persons. She entered the room dressed rather like a servant than the sister of the other lady, and after saluting us with a very good grace, retired to the further end of the room, where I could perceive her frequently blush, and seem in confusion at her brother's impertinence. I was soon prepossessed in her favour, and would have been very glad to have enjoyed her company, could I have hoped to obtain it without being troubled with that of her brother and sister.

As we rose up to go, the old gentleman and lady pressed us to stay supper; but as we were so far from home, we begged to be excused; when
after

after exchanging some compliments, and intreating them to return our visit at Paris, we took our leave. We were no sooner seated in the coach, than Mrs. Dorset cried, How dreadful are the effects of a wrong education! A gentleman with no other ideas than those of a peasant, is unworthy of the honours to which he is born. This young man will have a great estate, but his happiness must be confined in a narrow compass——While his mind is shut to every great and noble idea, he has no taste for rational pleasures; neither wisdom, the sweet delights of friendship, nor the godlike pleasures of virtue can have any charms for him. 'Tis true, Madam, rejoined Valville, what a vast difference must there be in the happiness of the virtuoso, who spends his life in the study of those sciences, which enlarge the mind by a continual accession of new and great ideas; what a vast disproportion I say between such a one, and the man whose views and satisfactions are all confined to the dull round of sensual enjoyments! can he be happy who has no other felicity than what his dogs, his horses, his bottle give him? his hounds rival him in the chase, and perhaps are sensible of more pleasure in the pursuit of their game, than their master. While every brook affords them a liquor as agreeable to their taste, and with which they can satiate their thirst with as high a satisfaction, as he with his richest wines. What a noble taste must that man have, who consents to forsake the divine pleasures of which his nature is capable of, to share only in the delights of his beagles and his horses! But, Sir, said I smiling, whatever pains men take to deprave their natures, I am persuaded that was the outward form to degenerate in proportion as the mind did so, we should have few or none, that would consent to change their form to be any other animal

animal under the sun. They are content with being brutes, while they preserve the outside of the man, tho' they are as really so, as if the form was changed too; for banish reason, and give the man canine inclinations, and what is he but a dog in masquerade. No, no, said Mr. de Valville laughing, I think you carry it a little too far now, while he is conscious that he has reason, tho' he suffer it to lie dormant, he is a man still: tho' he makes no use of his intellectual powers, but lets them lie by till they are rusty that they can be of little service to him, they are enough to constitute him in some measure a reasonable being. But how do you like the young ladies, Madam? added he, addressing himself to Mrs. Dorfin. I sincerely pity them both, said she; the eldest, tho' shamefully disregarded by her father and mother, is a very deserving woman; and wants nothing but a more favourable outside to render her every way charming: I am sorry to see persons of good sense, have such a partiality for their children; for nothing can be of worse consequence. The cultivation of young minds, added she, is a most important task. Just ideas ought to be instilled as soon as a mind is capable of receiving them; when the tender faculties open and expand themselves, they should begin to feel the force of that truth, which ought to be the rule of their after-conduct; and how delightful must it be for the young soul, in proportion as it ripens, to find itself continually entertained with the prospect of new and pleasing ideas. On the contrary, the time for improvement is commonly trifled away; the fond parent is afraid to give his favourite child the trouble of thinking, lest it should damp its vivacity; its little follies take up all his attention; while flattery and an unjust ap-

plause lay the seeds of innumerable vices, which spring up as soon as he arrives to manhood. On the other hand, the stern and inexorable parent damps the aspiring thoughts, depresses the mind, and makes it too often averse to improvement; since it is taught to regard the acquisition of knowledge as a most painful task. It is for your sake, Mr. de Valville, continued she smiling, that I make these reflections; you may soon know what it is to be a father, and then such observations may be useful to you; and I know you will excuse me if I add one word more, which is, that we should never give children any ideas, but such as they are capable of understanding with the greatest ease; we should encourage their enquiries; regard the pretty little creatures as our friends, and never use them with severity, while it is possible to work upon them by the gentler methods of tenderness and affection. But let us break off this subject. I think, Marianne, I ought to thank you for reproving the gentleman so smartly; I was extremely pleased with your manner of doing it, tho' I was afraid he would have been affronted. It is very unbecoming in a gentleman, who ought to be acquainted with the propriety of characters, to use with a wanton freedom, the name of that tremendous being who supports the fabric of the universe; how impious for man to jest with omnipotence; and call him to be a witness of his actions, even in the midst of a debauch!

THESE with other discourses past away the time till we got home, when we were told that the officer, attended by an elderly gentleman, had waited for us some time, but being fatigued with their journey were gone home, and had left word that they would return the next day before dinner. I was so disturbed at our being out of the way, that

It was with difficulty I concealed my uneasiness. I longed to know the success of his journey, and what news he brought from the village where I had spent so many years. I longed to thank this dear friend for all the trouble he had given himself on my account; to embrace him and call him uncle.——While we were at supper, Valville observed that I was more thoughtful than usual, but ascribed it to my being fatigued with my jaunt, and upon that account soon left me, that I might be at liberty to repose myself.

THE next morning I arose sooner than ordinary, dressed myself before breakfast, and sent a footman to acquaint the officer, that we should be glad to see him; but the servant had not been gone many minutes, when I heard my uncle speak to Mrs. Dorfin, whom he met coming down stairs, and immediately after he opened the door: I was then reading his letter, but threw it down and arose to meet him; when advancing hastily to me, O my niece, cried he, taking me in his arms and embracing me, thou dear remains of my lost brother! this tender exclamation at first softened me to such a degree, that I was unable to speak to him. At last recovering myself, Dear Sir, cried I, looking upon him with a tender kind of pleasure, you are the first, the only person I know of my kindred. How happy do I think myself in being related to you? While I was speaking, I heard Mrs. Dorfin and another person coming in; but how great, how inexpressible was my surprise, when lifting up my eyes, and looking over my uncle's shoulder, I saw a person whom I had long before thought dead, my dear friend, my indulgent parent Mr. de Rosand! I started, gave a shriek, stood motionless, while a flood of tender ideas flowed into my mind. My uncle meanwhile retired a few steps,

and Mr. de Rosand held me in his arms while joy tied both our tongues. At last he cried out, Oh my child ! here the tears trickled down his aged cheeks, and he was too full to say any more : Oh my father ! cried I, clasping my arms about him, and then was silent too, the tears gushed from my eyes, which while he kissed me, mingled with his. Sure there never was a more tender interview ! what a pleasing painful transport ! Our minds, Madam, are capable of receiving only a certain degree of pleasure, and all beyond that is pain. At last after recollecting himself, and giving me a most tender look, Never, never, since my sister's death, cried he, have I hoped to see thee again ; how afflicted have I been on thy account ! I have had a thousand fears lest thou shouldst be reduced to straits dangerous to thy virtue ; I feared thou wouldst be prevailed upon to blot thy innocence by some unworthy action ; but I thank God my fears were vain. Thou hast not disgraced the education I have given thee. This worthy gentleman has given me a history of thy behaviour in town ; I heard the pleasing story with a father's tenderness. I rejoice in thy innocence, and congratulate thee upon thy present happiness, the pleasing fruit of it. But oh my dear ! how couldst thou forget me, so as not to let me hear from thee all this while ? indeed that was unkind ; but thou didst not know perhaps how very dear thou wert to me. — Not know that did I say ? sure thou didst. I have given thee such proofs of my tenderness, as must make thee fully sensible of it. — Pray, dear Sir, cried I, don't wound my soul, with the suspicion that I could be so ungrateful as to forget you, who indeed have been a second father to me. I thought you had long ago left this world ; for the last letter you sent to

Mrs.

Mrs. de Rosand, which acquainted me with the dreadful news of your fall, and the loss of your benefice, told us that a few days were the utmost you could expect to live. I lamented your loss, at the same time that I did that of hers. Lord! in what dreadful grief was I involved! no words can express my distress; you had besides been obliged to quit your house, and as I knew not where to direct to you, the messenger I sent came back without being able to learn where to find you, or so much as knowing whether you were alive or not; this, joined to my thinking that so worthy a man could not be so much concealed, made me conclude that you were no more; but, O Sir, with what joy do I see that I was mistaken! my transports are quite insupportable.

HERE I dried my eyes, and looking round observed my uncle and Mrs. Dorfin bathed in tears. I found myself very weak; the sudden flow of spirits occasioned by this unexpected interview, made me almost ready to faint; I therefore sat down and endeavoured to compose myself. Mr. de Rosand took a chair and sat by me, when Mrs. Dorfin interrupted our conversation, by expressing the satisfaction she found in having an opportunity of thanking Mr. de Rosand for his affection to me; and even discovered such a lively and warm gratitude, that you would have thought she alone had been the person obliged. Your generosity and affection for my dear friend, said she, is so very extraordinary, that I can't help regarding you as a person who has a peculiar right to my esteem and friendship. You have been doubly a father to her; since without being obliged to protect her, or concern yourself in her affairs, you have discharged all the duties of a parent. It is now our turn to let you see that we acknowledge these

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benefits,

benefits, tho' we can never repay them. I hope, Sir, added she, you will do me the favour to accept of my house, till Marianne is married; I shall esteem this as a further obligation. I am greatly obliged to you, Madam, returned he, for the honour you do me; but I have already given my word to this gentleman. — Yes, Madam, returned my uncle, I have ordered a room to be fitted up for him; and as he is the preserver of a noble branch of our family, I think I ought to take him under my care. My dear niece, as you say, is infinitely more obliged to this gentleman than even to my brother; he only brought her into being, but this worthy man has made that being a blessing to her, by embellishing her mind with all that is great, noble, and generous. Without his care, my niece would either have perished, or wanted those improvements which now make us rejoice in her alliance; I therefore think myself obliged to give him that support which he has given you, my dear, added he, looking at me. Sir, said I, returning him a look full of gratitude, I thank you: you have not only by your industrious and ardent zeal for my happiness, placed me in a rank to which my highest ambition could never aspire, but have as it were raised from the dead a gentleman on whom my most early affections were placed, and for whose supposed death I have shed many tears. He, Sir, shall be my care; I will still pay him all that respect which is due from a daughter to the most worthy and best of parents; he shall live with Valville and I, as with a son and daughter, whilst I shall ever pray, that his life may be preserved as a blessing to us all. Ah! my dear! cried Mr. de Rosand, with a mixture of joy and tenderness in his looks; to see thee thus, is a sufficient reward for all my pains, my care
and

and concern for thee. I have no ambition for the glittering honours of this life, and must soon think of leaving it; but while I do live, methinks I should desire it should be with thee; but perhaps Mr. de Valville will be unwilling to admit me into his family; young men have little respect for grey hairs, and I may perhaps be looked upon as an intruder.——No, Sir, cried I, interrupting him hastily, Valville is already too well acquainted with your merit not to esteem your company as a very great blessing; besides his tenderness to me, must inspire him with the most grateful sentiments for you; but I thought, Sir, added I smiling, that you had too good an opinion of my discernment, to think I would marry a man, who could look coolly upon a friend to whom I am under such obligations. Indeed, Sir, returned Mrs. Dorfin, with a frank air, you will have no reason to complain of Mr. de Valville; but must my friend here engross all your attention? I assure you I have a very great desire to have a share in your esteem, and must expect that you would think yourself as welcome a guest here as even Marianne; since it is to you that I am indebted for having her; and to you she is indebted for herself; you have transferred to her your own goodness, your own great and generous ideas; and in giving her yourself, you have conferred not only upon her, but upon us the greatest benefit; a benefit which will I hope be extended to persons yet unborn. I am at a loss, Madam, returned Mr. de Rosand, to make a reply to so many compliments, all that I can say is, that I am as much charmed with your tenderness to my dear child (for I can't help calling her so) as I am with your goodness to me. Pray, Sir, returned Mrs. Dorfin, with a smile, let us have no more ceremony,

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friendship.

friendship is a stranger to it. Sir, added she, turning to my uncle, I long to know what success you have had in your journey; will you favour us with a particular recital of what passed since you honoured us with your letter? — I hope you have made some new discovery that will effectually clear up this affair. Yes, Madam, returned he, I have so. When I arrived at the village, where Marianne had spent the first part of her life, I made it my business to wait upon those gentlemen who had been Mr. de Rosand's friends, and from them I hoped to get some circumstances that might be sufficient to clear up every doubt; but they could tell me no more than I had already been acquainted with; at last I was informed that this gentleman, who was generally thought to have been dead, was retired to a nobleman's house at a small distance from thence, where he lived a private and retired life: I immediately went to him, told him the situation Marianne was in, and the business which brought me thither; a piece of news which he could not receive without rapture. He shewed me a writing drawn by a scrivener, which related all the particulars of her being found in the coach, with some circumstances that I had not been acquainted with; and this was dated but six days after the date of my brother's letter, which told me of his design to retire. I made strict enquiry after the canon of Sens, who had escaped being murdered with the rest, and had saved himself by flight. In short, I found him. He told me that the gentleman and lady were the parents of the child; that he had learnt from them, that they were obliged to leave their country, and had therefore concealed their names, and assumed those of foreigners. This he learnt thro' the indiscretion of one of the footmen, whom

whom he heard inadvertently call him by his title: the count seemed a little angry; and to prevent his suspecting his being guilty of any unworthy action, gave him an account of his reasons for concealing his name and quality; but however without letting him know who he was. But what puts it beyond all doubt, is, that this account of his reasons for retiring, exactly corresponds with that I received from my brother. The present count can make no exception to proofs like these, and therefore proposes to give up the estate which would have been his, had his brother died without issue; but he hopes that as he is obliged to support the dignity of his title, and I will add as he has constantly exerted himself in liberally supporting the indigent, and being a friend to the distressed by an unbounded munificence, you will not, my dear niece, insist upon his returning more than half of what he has received as his brother's heir; since he is not able to do it without involving himself in insuperable difficulties. You will see him to-day, he comes to congratulate you, and join in the general joy. I have provided an entertainment for you and Mr. de Valville, and I hope, Madam, added he, looking at Mrs. Dorfin, that we shall not be without your company, for I imagine there will be a scene that will be more than a little diverting, as I have engaged most of Mr. de Valville's friends to be with us, that my niece may triumph over their insolence and ill-nature. Sir; returned I, you must excuse me if I am at a loss for words to thank you; the gratitude that swells my heart is too big for utterance. As to the count, continued I, I rejoice that he has laid out the produce of my father's estate to such great advantage, and am sorry that he will be the poorer for knowing his niece; I will therefore do

more than he requires. But, why, Sir, will you give me the pain of introducing me into company that hates and despises me? I can dispense with giving them any confusion, and have not the least inclination to triumph over their ill-nature; but however, Sir, I will submit myself to your will, and chearfully consent to whatever you require. Nay, my dear, said he, it is fit they should all know their error as soon as possible, and this will give you an opportunity of letting them see that you can forgive the injuries they have offered you. Besides, I long to hear how your lover will vindicate his choice, from your intrinsic excellencies, without the vain blandishments of wealth and honour. This will shew that he is worthy of you, and that his heart is fixed on those charms, which will ever be your brightest ornament.— Well Sir, said Mrs. Dorfin, I can't help approving of your reasons; Mr. de Valville has not the least suspicion of this happy discovery: but if we must go with you it is time to prepare for it; we shall soon be ready to wait upon you. Gentlemen your servant. Come, my dear, added she, as we left the room together, a very little alteration in your dress will be sufficient; I would have you appear to-day as plain as possible, and without any other jewels than those which nature and education have given you. With all my heart, Madam, returned I, and retired to my room, when in a few minutes I was ready to go; but as I returned to the dining-room, I saw Valville enter just before me. My dear, said he, turning to me, I heard you was one of the party invited to this gentleman's house, and therefore have brought my coach for you. Sir, I thank you, returned I; but you must know this gentleman, 'tis Mr. de Rosand; you have heard me mention him. What! the person.

person who has been such a sincere friend to you, cried he, and to whom I am obliged for many of your charms. Yes, Sir, returned my uncle, this is the gentleman who has been a father to Miss Marianne. Then, Sir, said Valville, you must be a father to her still; we thought you had been dead; but I rejoice to find that we were mistaken. This is a very happy meeting; for I assure you, you are very dear to Marianne, and I am sure will not be less so to me. I have reason to look upon you as my best friend, since I receive a treasure from you, which I esteem more than my life. Here they embraced each other, and after some reciprocal protestations of friendship, Mrs. Dorfin being now ready, we all set out in my uncle's coach, and Valville sent his own home.

We soon arrived at my uncle's; but being told that but few of the company were come, and that they were in the garden, we proposed to walk there too, and converse till dinner-time. We were here entertained with several agreeable prospects; and walked some time before we saw any of the persons who came before us; at last as we were rambling thro' a pleasing kind of labyrinth, we saw at a small distance from us, the long meagre lady who had carried me from the convent; she was talking very warmly to another of our sex, whom I had never seen before, she was much younger than the other lady, and had a countenance of a most satyrical cast. When she laughed, there seemed to be a great deal of ill-nature hid under it, and a smile had the appearance of a most severe invective. Valville observed them first, and turning to me pointed to them, on which we stood still to observe their gestures, which appeared very extraordinary; they were so earnestly engaged in conversation, that they had not the leisure to

look about them, and therefore did not see us, but walked slowly on, wholly taken up with their subject. When we had viewed them for some time, I proposed to walk on; but we had no sooner turned our backs, than we observed the old lady raise her voice, and cry out in a haughty tone, If she is to be here, I am resolved to affront her. Nay, Madam, replied the other, what end will that answer? I suppose she is to dine with us. Dine with us! cried she, she dine with us! I hope Mr. de N—— don't intend to affront us! I say dine with us too; what! oblige ladies of quality to dine with a girl that has been a servant at a little paltry linen-draper's. No, no, I will never submit to that: she shall not dine with me. Hold, Madam, said the other, she is a lady of quality, you know; why you can't tell what an honour her alliance may be to your family. She is certainly some princess. This was spoke with a laugh more bitter and piercing, than the keenest reproaches. However, I could not help thinking, that I should soon be revenged for the insults they were offering me; and this thought in spight of myself gave me some pleasure; and indeed I could not help indulging it. It was too agreeable to glance thro' my mind, on an occasion like this, without giving me some emotion; especially as this was the only comfort I then had to support me. Valville I observed coloured a little, and seemed under some confusion at this discourse, but he had an air that expressed the utmost indignation, mixed with that noble pride, which swells the mind at the reflection of its having done nothing unworthy of itself. My uncle I observed whispered to Mrs. Dorfin, and both smiled with an air of satisfaction; while Mr. de Rosand seemed the only unconcerned spectator, as he could not
guess

guess from what was said, who was the subject of their satire. We now thought it time to retire, since we found we were likely to be entertained with nothing but invectives. And as we began to turn into another walk, Mrs. Dorfin came up to me, and whispering, desired me not to be concerned. Your uncle, said she, has ordered his servants to acquaint the guests who are chiefly those of Mr. de Valville's friends, and your most inveterate enemies, that you are to be here at dinner; and he is pleased to think how warmly he is likely to be attacked; but I don't doubt but he will bring himself off with honour. I am sorry, returned I, that you have resolved to give my dear Valville any uneasiness; I know he can't bear to hear me used ill without pain, and sure it is cruel to sport with his affection to me, and to make that tenderness, upon which I found my happiness, the cause of his inquietude. Indeed I can't help feeling for him all the uneasiness which I believe he will feel on my account; I wish he once knew who I am——Have a little patience, my dear, replied she, Mr. de Valville will soon be acquainted with this agreeable news, and the proofs he will now give you of his inviolable affection, will afford you very agreeable reflections. We now took a turn down another walk, which led us to a painted alcove, where we sat down, and explained to Mr. de Rosand the conversation we had just heard, by giving him a particular account of my life at Paris: and after sitting some time walked in.

WE found Mrs. de Fare, the old disagreeable lady, and her companion whom we had just seen in the garden, with several gentlemen in the dining-room, who immediately rose as we went in; but as soon as they saw me, I observed several of them
look

look upon me with an air of contempt, turn away their heads and whisper to each other. We were no sooner seated, than the lady we had seen in the garden, asked Mr. de Valville with a sneer, when he was to be married to Miss Varthon; she is certainly, said she, a most accomplished lady, and I hope they injure you very much, who have the assurance to say, that you are capable of being false to a lady of such extraordinary merit as well as fortune. I don't dispute Miss Varthon's merit, returned Valville with a smile, she may perhaps deserve a more worthy person than I am; but she was never formed to make me happy; and was I ever so much her humble servant, I should perhaps never be able to obtain her, as I shall probably never see her more. I shall therefore marry a lady, that I think at least of much greater merit; and who in my opinion has not only more charms than Miss Varthon, but than all her sex. A lady! cried the old spectre, a lady! no more of your ladies I beseech you! You mean that forward slut there, that I ordered to be carried to the prime-minister's. Prithee, my girl, added she, looking at me, hast thou the vanity to think thyself a match for a gentleman? Don't you think yourself very happy in having such a cully? I know you think him a fool for having any thoughts of marrying you; don't you now? Come, be plain, tell me what's your opinion of him. I will, Madam, be plain, since you desire it, returned I, and must therefore tell you, I think him superior to your malice; and that he looks with as much contempt upon your spleen and ridiculous pride as I do. If I want an estate equal to his, I don't want those dispositions which will make me always strive to render him happy: this shall be the business of my life, and this the end of every action. Here Valville gave me

me a glance, which seemed to thank me for this tender declaration. How pert the little creature is! cried she, with a haughty supercilious air; I would have you to know, that I expect to be treated with more respect. Valville you ought to teach her, to use her superiors in a manner more becoming her. But you are a foolish, giddy, young fellow, and are resolved to ruin yourself; this will be the consequence of your marrying this little adventurer; remember I tell you so. Dear Madam, returned Valville, don't be so hot, indeed it don't become you; you will never be able to make me consult you in what concerns my happiness; you may despise my dear Marianne as much as you please, we shall only laugh at your ill humour.

HERE a little old gentleman at the other end of the room; who had been looking at me very attentively thro' his glass, desired he might be permitted to speak. He had a countenance dry and formal; had hollow jaws and no teeth; was dressed in a thread-bare velvet coat, that had been many years out of fashion, and seemed to have been made in the days of our ancestors, with the inside of the flap plentifully stuck with pins. When after clearing his voice, blowing his nose, and taking some pains to prepare himself, he addressed himself to Mr. de Valville. Young man, said he, with a slow voice, you ought to consider that this good lady would not have been so desirous of hindering your marriage, did not she fear that you are about to ruin yourself, and throw a disgrace upon her family; and for this reason you ought to pardon her warmth. Pray, now, let me reason coolly with you; you are about to be guilty of an action that I am afraid you will repent of: consider the girl tho' she is pretty has no money; or however
but

but little in comparison of your estate. Now was you prudent you might get a lady with a fortune of many thousand livres a year; ay, many thousand livres——consider that; and is not such a treasure more valuable than all the beauty in the world? Is beauty, or virtue, or any of your imaginary fine romantic qualifications an equivalent for her want of money? consider, Sir, you may have a large family, and then will these trifles give fortunes to your children? No, no, when you are as old as I am, you will regard money as the only blessing of life. Your expences as soon as you are married will encrease, and that girl, tho' she brings you little or nothing to support them, will expect to live in as splendid a manner, as if she had brought you an estate of fifty thousand livres a year.

ALL this while he had one of his hands in his waistcoat pocket, and at every word, I heard chink; for there seemed to be such a connection between his thoughts and the subject of them, that he could not talk of one without fingering the other.

VALVILLE could not help smiling at the old miser's discourse. Sir, returned he, your sentiments and mine are very different; I have no ambition to hoard up heaps of useless treasure. I marry to be happy; and to be blessed in the possession of a woman, whose consummate goodness will sweeten all the unavoidable cares of life; and who will be to me a more valuable purchase, than all the treasures of the earth. I am rich enough, and have an estate much greater than all our wants. An estate that will render my children as happy as wealth can make them, since should I have a numerous offspring it will place them all above the cares of life; and I could only wish to have more, that I might be able to render my fellow creatures
more

more happy. Of what advantage is wealth, if I have not a heart to make use of it? If the poor don't bless me for tasting the fruit of it, and the dejected honest man has not his anxieties removed? While I have sufficient to render myself and my posterity easy, and to make the drooping heart exult in transports of joy, I shall think myself rich enough. Well, Sir, cried the long meagre relation, pray how long will this generous fit last? It won't be long before you will think all this stuff, mere rant and extravagant nonsense. You will call yourself fool for not taking our advice, and upbraid this pretty angelic creature for her want of a fortune: ay, and give her the most bitter curses too, for her hindering your preferment. Who do you think will keep you company? Who do you think will own this girl, this disgrace to your family, for a relation? Have you stupidity enough to be insensible to all the slights that will be put upon you, by your relations, your friends, thro' the means of that little impertinent hussy; that—— Hold, Madam, cried Valville, interrupting her, don't think you have a right thus publicly to vent your spleen against this charming creature; and to assume liberties equally repugnant to good manners, and common sense. I have told you already that I shall never ask your advice, or desire you to direct me where to fix my heart. As to my dear Marianne's being a disgrace to our family, I shall only say that the best wish I can make you, is, that you may be like her; and I don't question, but if I was so happy as to know her birth, I should find myself greatly honoured by her alliance. Had she indeed no other charms than those of a most lovely person, I know I should soon cease to admire her; but her mind has beauties even more attractive than her form. On these I build my hopes.

hopes of felicity ; these will ever be the same, and render her charming even in old age. As to your being ashamed to own her for a relation, I am not at all concerned about it ; and believe me, if there are any who call themselves my friends, that behave in the same manner ; I shall look upon them with contempt, and think they only envy our happiness, which however neither they nor you will ever be able to disturb.

COULD any thing be more pleasing to me at this time, Madam, than to receive such marks of my dear Valville's sincerity and affection ; my heart rebounded with joy at the strong assurances I received of his fidelity, and then melted into a pleasing softness, which I dare say he might easily read in my eyes. I did not indeed before question the truth of his passion ; nor could I admit a thought of his wanting those tender sentiments, which I knew informed his soul ; but yet this public acknowledgement of his inviolable love, this visible proof of his unshaken constancy in the midst of opposition, had something extremely engaging in it ; it gave me a new kind of delight, and made him then seem dearer to my heart than ever. The old miser all this while seemed very attentive to the debate, and at every tender sentiment, shrugg'd up his shoulders and shook his head. Mrs. de Fare had not yet spoke one word, and by her looks seemed much at a loss how to behave, whilst most others of the company, methought were inclined to declare themselves in my favour. My uncle and Mrs. Dorfin appeared resolved to stand neuter, and had only by their smiles, and some looks which expressed a kind of applause, encouraged Valville. But Mr. de Rosand, who more nearly heard the reproaches which were cast upon me, could hardly tell how to stifle his resentment : he frequently coloured,

loured, bit his lips, and seemed to struggle with himself to keep his temper, and preserve silence. But to proceed :

VALVILLE had no sooner made this tender reply to the disagreeable old lady his relation, than her companion with an ironical laugh cast her eyes upon him. La ! Sir, cried she, how mighty prettily you talk ! why all this is heroic. Bless me ! I thought I had heard Oroondates and Statira ; how charmingly romantic you are ! Come, pray let us have some more of your flights, for really they are diverting ; you ought now to turn to your fair goddess, tell her that her divine beauties alone could captivate your heart ; and like a true enamorado assure her, that one smile from her will gloriously reward you for all the scorn, insult and reproach you can suffer for her sake ; and that you will esteem yourself too happy, if she will permit you to die at her feet. This was uttered with such a comical air, that even Valville could not help smiling. Madam, returned he, you may rally me as much as you please ; nothing that you can say, will be able to make me think virtue, beauty, and fine sense ridiculous ; my tenderness is founded on reason, since it is only a love of what is in its own nature most lovely. I don't raise my expectations to any extravagant heights, nor form any ideas of my dear Marianne, which all who know her won't allow she deserves. This lady, these gentlemen, added he, turning to Mrs. Dorwin, my uncle and Mr. de Rosand will do me the justice to say, that she deserves all I have said of her ; and that she has even a mind more amiable than I have represented it. Well ! epough, enough, cried the old lady, I am sick of this fulsome stuff, if you will ruin yourself I can't help it ; I have done my endeavour to prevent it ; all that vexes me

is,

is, that your family must be disgraced ; you ought to have regard to that ; and to consider that you have no right to make us suffer for your follies. Had you taken her into keeping, and spent your whole estate upon her, I should not have troubled myself about it ; but to pretend to marry a vagabond, an orphan, I have not patience to think of it ; and nobody but such a silly coxcomb as you would ever behave thus. While she was railing in this manner, we were desired to walk into the next room, and were told that dinner was upon table. We all went immediately, but as we were taking our seats, this lady called to my uncle, Sir, said she, leaning upon the back of her chair, do you propose to suffer that little impertinent girl to dine with persons of quality ? Who do you mean, Madam ? returned he ; there is nobody here that deserves that character. Who do I mean ! who should I mean but Marianne, replied she, I hope you have not invited us here to affront us ; I won't sit down to the same table with her I tell you ; no, I will never stoop so low as to put myself upon a level with such a creature. Well, Madam, returned he, smiling, if you won't sit down at this table, you shall sit where you please ; my house is at your service. What ! I must dine by myself then, must I ? cried she, in a greater rage than ever ; pray, let somebody order my servants to get the coach ready. I thought, Sir, that you had known the world better than to treat persons of my rank with so much rudeness.

WHILE she was speaking these last words, the Count de V—— entered the room, and after having whispered something to his brother, who stood near the door, came forward, saluted the company, and embraced me with an air equally tender and polite. I don't think, Miss, said he,

as he approached me, that I can be mistaken; you must be the lady my brother has so well described to me; and I am glad to find I have such an amiable niece. Let me congratulate you upon your knowledge of the family to which you belong; and beg at the same time that you would regard me as a man who will always have your interest at heart; for upon the fine encomiums my brother has given me of you, I am ambitious of joining the character of your friend to that of your uncle. Sir, I need not tell you, returned I, how much my vanity is flattered at the discovery that I spring from your noble family; but I assure you, I am more delighted at the thoughts of your's and your brother's worth, than at all the honours I can receive thro' your alliance. You will both find that I shall constantly behave to you with all that duty, that might have been expected from me, had I been always brought up in the knowledge of my near relation to you.

You can't imagine, Madam, what an odd group of figures were formed here in a moment. The tall meagre lady who was got to the door, but stepped back to make way for the count to enter, turned her head, stood all this while stiffened into a statue; her mouth was open, and her hands lifted up in a posture of amazement; her eyes stared wide open, and her brows raised into a high arch, crowded her shriveled forehead into a confused heap of wrinkles; in short nothing could appear more grotesque. The old miser leaning upon the back of his chair biting the nails of one hand, and with the other scratching his bald head, and thus with his wig almost off, stood with his eyes fixed on the count and me. The satirical lady was immoveable too, and with a mortified look pressed the extremity of her fan against her lips.

lips. Mrs. de Fare seemed as much astonished as the rest, but appeared less confused, and had an air that shewed she was glad she had not ventured to say any thing against me, tho' her silence proceeded rather from Mr. de Valville's being present, than from any regard to me. In short, all who did not know of this discovery had a gesture which expressed their astonishment. Valville who stood close to me, (for, Madam, I must not forget him) fixed his eyes upon me, and then cast them upon the ground, with a kind of tender confusion, mixed with diffidence and surprise: While Mrs. Dorfin, Mr. de Rosand, and the officer smiled in a manner that expressed their inward satisfaction.

WHILE we were talking thus, my uncle the officer put us in mind that it would be more proper to defer all further ceremony till after we had dined; since the dinner would soon be cold. Here are more persons, brother, said he, that you must be acquainted with; but first sit down to table. This gentleman, added he, looking at Mr. de Rosand, must be our chaplain. On which he immediately said grace and we took our seats.

HERE the old lady composing her countenance, came to us with a disordered air; when Mrs. Dorfin giving her a look full of affability, desired her to sit down; she did so; and the rest of her friends followed her example. We were no sooner seated, than I asked how my grandmother, the countess dowager did. She is well, Miss, said the count, but too old to undertake such a journey; she longs to see you, and I have promised to take you with me to her to-morrow. Sir, returned I, I shall gladly attend her; and I assure you, I have at least as great a desire to see her, as she can have to see me. I shall now be informed with those dear, those social

affections of which I have hitherto been deprived. All this while Valville seemed wrapped in thought, and very uneasy, which Mrs. Dorfin perceiving, asked him with a smile how he did, and added, We must beg pardon, Sir, for concealing circumstances from you, in which you are so nearly concerned: Marianne is indeed the late Count de V——'s daughter, who was leaving France incognito, when he and the Countess were robbed and murdered; but you must not blame her for her reserve; for she is not at all in fault, our friend here has unravelled this affair, and it was not till this morning that we were certain of the truth. Here Valville sighed, and was going to make an answer, when Mrs. de Fare cried out — Is it possible? is this lady indeed a person of quality? — bless me! how have we been mistaken! may I hope that you will forgive me, Miss, added she; had I known who you were I should have treated you with more respect, than I did when you were at my house. How glad am I that I have said nothing here to your prejudice! my daughter will be overjoyed at this news; and how happy shall I think myself, if you will honour us with your friendship! Well! but how did you make this wonderful discovery? continued she, addressing herself to Mrs. Dorfin, I really long to hear every particular; methinks the young lady has charms which I never observed before? — Why, Mr. de Valville you will be vastly happy; every body will envy your felicity. Very true, cried the lady who had been so satirical upon Valville and me, Miss Varthon ought not to be brought in competition with this lovely creature; she is pretty indeed, but then she is a most intollerable coquette. La! how could she be so vain as to rival Miss Marianne. Why Mr. de Valville, I
now

now think your commendations of this young lady sell very short of what she deserves; she is infinitely more lovely than you have represented her; the Count de V——'s daughter! Well! you must certainly be very happy. I have upon my word a mighty respect for you both, and heartily wish you all imaginable joy.

WHILE they were running on in this manner, I could not help seriously reflecting on the instability of the human mind; and the strong prejudices which most people indulge in favour of the glittering advantages of birth and fortune. Half an hour ago I was looked upon with contempt, said I, to myself, by these very persons who now endeavour to court me to a good opinion of them, by the most ridiculous flattery, the grossest adulation: am I better than I was then? Have I more virtue, beauty or wit? have I one qualification to authorize this change? no. They find I am the daughter of a count——there lies the charm——“ye right honourable sounds!” ye vain blandishments that dazzle weak eyes! what wonderful charm do you contain! will you make me more wise, more virtuous, or more happy? will you render me a more worthy friend; a better wife; or a more tender parent? will ye disperse the care from my heart, when it is oppressed with grief? or have you the power to remove the slightest head-ach? no: what art thou then, but a mere name, a breath of wind; and can a breath in a moment work such a mighty change? but Valville's downcast looks tell me, that all these honours give him no joy, and that he longs for an opportunity to open his heart to me.——These reflections were interrupted by the old meagre lady's drinking to me; when setting down her glass, I have behaved too much like an enemy to you, Miss, cried she, ever

to hope that you will forgive me ; however, when you consider, that all the injuries I have offered you, have proceeded from a mistaken opinion that you were of low birth, and from a regard to the honour of our family, as well as a concern for the happiness of my cousin Valville, you may think that I might have some reason to oppose an alliance, which to me appeared dishonourable to us. But I sincerely beg your pardon, and hope you will forget what is past, since I am sorry and ashamed of my behaviour. Nay, Madam, returned I, I don't think you have any reason to alter your opinion of me, and can therefore dispense with your shame and concern ; I am the same person as I was when you treated me with such contempt, and can lay no greater claim to your esteem than I could then. The honour of a virtuous mind is derived from itself, and can receive no addition from the accidental advantages of birth or fortune ; nor can the want of them render a person truly valuable worthy of reproach. However, Madam, I readily consent to forgive your treatment of me, and all the uneasiness you have made me suffer, on condition that you mention it no more ; and behave with the same freedom as if you had ever been my friend.

As soon as dinner was over, Mr. de Rosand, the count, and the officer joined in conversation, when I retired for a few minutes into another room ; Mrs. Dorfin whispered Valville to follow me ; he did so with a dejected look ; took a chair and sat down by me ; when after a few moments silence, Ah, my dear Marianne, cried he, with a troubled voice, at the same time giving me a glance that at once expressed the diffidence, the anxiety, and tenderness of a lover suspended between hope and fear ; what am I to expect ? have I not reason to

be apprehensive that this discovery will ruin my hopes, and prove fatal to the repose of my life? While your birth was unknown to me, I loved you — Ah with what tenderness I loved you! — My passion can admit of no encrease from the honours to which you have now a claim. I am still, still the same; and must wish you had yet been ignorant of your birth, if that discovery can for a moment make me seem less worthy of sharing your heart. May I hope I am yet as dear to you as ever? — Come, Sir, let me beg of you not to make me uneasy by these unkind suspicions, returned I with a smile, at the same time giving him my hand; I rejoice that it is now in my power to offer you a fortune that will be worth your acceptance, and was it ever so great it should be entirely at your disposal; since you could be so generous as to think of marrying me without any. You will now be saved from the reproaches of your friends; — come, resume your gaiety, and don't be so unjust as to injure my tenderness. O thou dear lovely creature! cried he, tenderly grasping my hand, how can I enough admire your goodness? will nothing be able to take off your thoughts from me? — forgive my suspicions; — forgive the pain I have caused myself by entertaining such cruel fears; — O my dear charmer! I will now forget them all — This proof of your affection, is infinitely more transporting than the consideration of every other advantage I can possibly enjoy from the discovery of your birth and fortune — Love has left no room for ambition in my soul; no room for sordid avarice — I am all tenderness — all delight and admiration. While he spoke this, his cheeks glowed with pleasure, and he cast upon me a look the most tender and affectionate I ever beheld. Dear, Sir, returned

turned I, with answering looks of affection, I don't know how to blame you for your injustice to me, while the discovery of it gives you such satisfaction ; what a charming thing is love, continued I, smiling, since its very pains are succeeded by such pleasing transports !——But I must thank you, Sir, for the engaging manner in which you have vindicated your affection to me, while my birth was unknown to you, and while you thought me without relations or friends. It was indeed with some reluctance, that I was brought over to consent to your suffering such a severe trial ; but I can't now repent of it, since it has given you an opportunity of discovering to the world, upon what noble and generous principles you proceed ; and I assure you, I shall never think of this adventure but with pleasure. I am happy, indeed, my dear, returned he, if I have said any thing that gives you pleasure on reflection ; this I could not have hoped for. What happiness may I not expect from the possession of a person, who kindly considers all my actions in the best light ! Nay, Sir, returned I, I should have been highly pleased to have heard any other person vindicate himself in the same agreeable manner, tho' perhaps not equally so. If a conformity of sentiment can render us happy, I may flatter myself that we shall enjoy as great a degree of felicity as is consistent with human nature ; if we don't, it must be our own faults. It is necessary, however, that we should always preserve that settled complacency, which is needful to support a friendship that ought never to be interrupted ; and as it is impossible that we should always behave well, it is absolutely necessary that we should be sometimes blind to each others imperfections. This is a rule, which I am sure, you will have frequent occasion to put

in practice, tho' I hope, upon the whole I shall behave in such a manner, as to gain your approbation. Ah! my charmer, replied he, I shall find but little need of this caution; you are incapable of an ill intention, and I must surely have too much complacency in you, my dear, or rather too much justice, to be offended without it. I shall daily find in you fresh subject of admiration; your native sweetness of temper will sooth my mind into an habitual calm, and preserve me from being ruffled by the ordinary cares of life. One joy, one care, one pleasure, will employ both our minds, while our only contention shall be, who will with the greatest assiduity promote each other's happiness. Thus when tired with the impertinence and folly of mankind (for it is impossible that we should be always in the most agreeable company) I shall return home to a friend who will receive me with an open heart; into which with an unrestrained confidence, I can pour all my concerns; a friend, whose gaiety will divert my chagrin, and whose good sense will inspire me with a delightful tranquillity, and charm away every uneasy thought. I wish, Sir, returned I, you would not carry your expectations to such a visionary height, for I am terribly afraid you will be disappointed. Methinks such exquisite happiness is too much, my dear Valville, too much to be even hoped for.——Why so, my dear, cried he, hastily interrupting me; what can hinder us from being completely blessed, since we want nothing that can render us happy in ourselves, and agreeable to each other? A love of virtue, and the charms of that union which is founded on the same desires, views and interests, must render our conversations too agreeable, for us to suffer any of those dull intervals of life which are the punishments of most of those, who from less
laudable

laudable motives enter into the marriage-state. But do you imagine, Sir, returned I, that we shall meet with no rubs in life, nothing that will make us forget ourselves? we are not always wise; and I am persuaded we shall not always think ourselves happy, unless we take a resolution to be so in spite of all opposition. A thousand little incidents may start up and interrupt our mutual felicity; we should therefore take a peculiar care not to be too much affected by trifles; for I have observed that it is the most insignificant things, that commonly render people unhappy, and create those disgusts which must be attended by the most fatal consequences. Here we are apt to be off our guard, and therefore forget ourselves before we are aware: we are lost in a labyrinth of ungovernable passions, and involved in inquietudes which we should never have experienced from the most reasonable causes of discontent. We need only, I believe, attend to this caution to render us completely blessed, and as happy as the sincerest friendship, the tenderest love can make us. Your solidity and good sense will put a restraint upon my levity; and my vivacity prevent the wiser disposition of your mind, from degenerating into a musty and unpleasing gravity. But come, Sir, added I rising, let us rejoin the company, they won't thank us for being so rude as to leave them so long together. Valville endeavoured to persuade me to stay a little longer, but I desired him to excuse me, and we immediately returned to them.

As we entered the room, I observed the old miser listening very attentively to the Count and his brother, and found that he was asking them some questions relating to my fortune. They all rose as soon as they saw us, when Mrs. Dorfin taking

taking me by the hand, You have been away a great while, said she smiling, and if I had known how long you would have deprived us of your company, I should not perhaps have sent Mr. de Valville after you; but however you are very excusable, and we are not over fond of ceremony. Well, Mr. de Valville, added she, how do you do now? I find Miss Marianne has brought you to yourself, and we may hope to find you good company again; indeed I was concerned to see you look so uneasy. Here the Count took Valville by the hand, I am glad, Sir, said he, that I am to have such a worthy gentleman for my kinsman; since you left us, Mrs. Dorfin and my brother have given me an account of your passion for my niece, and such a character of you as makes me think her very happy in having placed her affections upon a person of so much merit. Valville returned this compliment in a very handsome manner, when we sat down and entered into a general conversation.

BUT, perhaps, Madam, you may think these long discourses quite impertinent; I shall therefore wave repeating any more of them for the present, and pass on to some incidents which you may possibly find more diverting.

WE spent the rest of the day very agreeably; and the evening was concluded with a ball, which lasted till morning. Instead of jarring discord, ill-humour and petulant remarks, we were now surrounded with nothing but mirth and gaiety; every thing past was forgotten; and we were in a little time as good friends, as if we had never been enemies; but I must not forget to tell you that the old miser, who had, I fancy, drank my health with a higher relish and larger draughts than the rest, as perhaps wisely considering that it was unnecessary to use restraint when at another's expense,

pence, was resolved to honour us with a dance; and tho' he could hardly hobble along without his cane, cut such capers as gave us the greatest diversion, which we testified by applauses, that he ought rather to have looked upon as censures than commendations. The lady of the satirical cast of mind, was most maliciously profuse of her praises, and extolled his agility and sprightly vivacity in such a ludicrous and extravagant manner, that thinking her in earnest, he imagined he was as young and agreeable as ever, and therefore in the pride of his heart, resolved once more to cut another caper: but alas! how short-lived is human glory! in the midst of his performance, he unhappily took a false step, overset a sideboard of glasses and sweetmeats, and fell with them to the floor. The gentlemen ran to his assistance, whilst terrified at the dreadful crash, he lay without sense or motion; they helped him up, placed him in an elbow-chair, and took up his wig, which lay at some distance from him, whilst we all condoled his misfortune. Mrs. Dorlin and I were at first really concerned for fear he had hurt himself; but that concern was soon dissipated, for after rubbing his shins, and making a thousand wry faces, he recovered his breath, when we waited to hear him complain of his bruises; but how greatly were we surprized to hear him cry out in a dismal tone, Oh my poor silk stockings; they are stained——they are entirely spoilt——I have wore them upon occasion these seven years.——Ah what a misfortune! had I but staid at home——But, Sir, cried Mrs. Dorlin, interrupting him, your legs, your legs, how do they do? My legs, cried he, I should not have cared for my legs, had not I stained my stockings; I don't mind bruising my legs, they will be well again, but my stockings

——Ah that confounded claret!——Here we stood looking at each other with amazement, when the satirical lady lifting up her hands, cried out with a serious look, what a dreadful catastrophe! the gentleman has stained his poor dear stockings with cursed claret, a loss that can never be repaired! had it been blood instead of that pernicious liquor, I should not not have cared, then they might have been washed! Oh the dear stockings! We could contain ourselves no longer, but burst into a general laugh, at which the poor miser was so offended, that he took the first opportunity to retire, after having desired my uncle the officer to lend him his coat.

I MIGHT possibly, Madam, make some very smart reflections upon this adventure, were I disposed to it, since nothing in nature makes a more ridiculous figure, than a person bent, under the weight of years, mimicking the gay and sprightly airs of youth; but this was not, I believe, his natural character, since all his pretty janty airs, were owing rather to the influence of an enlivened cup, than any settled disposition. He seemed indeed to have no vice but an insatiable avarice; or rather, his avarice swallowed up and contained all the other vices——what a vile and infamous disposition must that be, which lays waste the foundation of every virtue; stifles that moral sense which is implanted in the heart of every good being, and renders the mind that is actuated by it the most completely wretched! What a sordid pleasure to look upon treasures that it dare not use; and to glut the eyes with the sight of what it can only enjoy by seeing! such a person may hug himself with the poor delight of enjoying what he dare not enjoy; for since riches are of no other use than to supply us with the necessaries and conveniences of life,

life, we can only be said to enjoy them, when we make use of them.

MR. de Rosand behaved on this occasion in a manner agreeable to his character, he was chearful and yet wise ; his mirth was sober and polite, and his good humour and vivacity, far from making old age appear less venerable, gave it charms which commanded respect, at the same time that it inspired with pleasure. His joy was like the transports of a father exulting in the happiness of his child. Every paternal affection gladdened his heart, sparkled in his eyes, and diffused over his whole person a satisfaction, a delight, a gaity, truly parental.

THE disagreeable old lady, who now desired to appear my friend, caressed me in a manner peculiar to herself ; she was very liberal of her praises, and endeavoured at the same time to insinuate herself into my esteem, by flattering my vanity, in letting me know the greatness of the family to which I was going to be united, which indeed was not much inferior to my own. She began with giving me a history of her family, with all the marriages and intermarriages into those of the first quality ; and before we broke up, had informed me how many marshals, constables, and other great officers it had produced ; circumstances which Mrs. de Valville's modesty had not permitted her to mention, and which her good sense did not suffer her to lay any great stress upon, tho' this lady could not speak of them without rapture, and betraying a ridiculous vanity, which discovered itself in every word. Her friend, who had been so maliciously severe upon Valville and me, took another way to ingratiate herself into my favour ; which she doubtless thought would have proved an infallible one : she assumed all the outside appearance

of friendship; she conformed herself to all my words and actions; she was always of my mind; smiled when I smiled, and when I was grave, she appeared serious; she hung upon my looks, watch'd every motion, and even governed her wit by my glances, till I was heartily sick of being thus ridiculously aped. In fine, they were now both changed to persons of the most servile complaisance: thus the proud, when humbled, are the most obsequious fawning creatures in the universe.

You can't imagine, Madam, how very disagreeable these persons made themselves; or how much I was disgusted at their nauseous flattery and ridiculous attempts to please: I was always a friend to truth and sincerity, and I believe should not in my vainest moments have thought such a behaviour even tolerable. They that have a high relish for the pure delights of friendship, can't bear to have the sacred name of friend, usurped by those who have neither sense nor delicacy enough to know what it means. The very pretence made by such a person, is like using the name on purpose to betray; besides, this polite kind of complaisance, as it does not spring from the heart, looses all its winning graces; for nothing can touch the heart, that does not originally spring from it. But I must proceed.

THE next day about noon, Valville, my two uncles, Mr. de Rosand and I set out for Versailles; after taking leave of Mrs. Dorfin, who embraced me, and gave us the usual compliments of wishing us a good journey. Our conversation upon the road was gay and sprightly, and made the time pass away very agreeably. In the evening we arrived at the Count's house, a magnificent edifice near the city. When we stepped out of the coach
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he gave me his hand, led me in, and presented me to the Countess his lady, who I could easily perceive regarded me with a cold and restrained countenance, which she discovered in spite of herself, and which perhaps was more visible by her endeavouring to conceal it; for her very smiles were clouded with an air of discontent. She was pretty fat; and tho' above forty, had beauty enough to render her person agreeable, tho' she had something in her look which did not please me; something that methought shewed a disposition selfish and a little mercenary.

WHILE this lady was bidding us welcome, my grandmother entered the room, and no sooner saw me, than she cast her arms about my neck; My dear child, cried she, I rejoice that I have lived to see thee again before I die; thy looks are enough to convince me that thou art indeed my granddaughter; what a resemblance there is between you and my son's wife! methinks I see again that dear lady before me——they are both revived in thee. Here I threw my arms about her neck, the tears gushed from my eyes, while I felt some new, some unknown affections rising in my breast; sensations which I had not hitherto either experienced or formed an idea of; a tenderness very different from that of love or friendship. Now, cried I with a sigh, I am happy indeed; Oh my mother, my dear grandmother!——She wept too; whilst joy shone thro' her tears, and all the emotions of her heart were visible in her countenance. After our first transports were over, we sat down, when the old lady asked Mr. de Rosand a thousand questions concerning me, with an eagerness which expressed all the affection of a parent; then called him her best friend, the patron of her family, and the father of her dear child. At last, she desired

to know if Mr. de Valville was not the gentleman that was shortly to be her grandson? the Count told her he was, and that we were to be married in a few days. Well, cried she, may heaven pour down upon you both its choicest blessings! may your happiness exceed even your wishes. We thanked the old lady for her blessing, and then insensibly entered into a general conversation.

THE next morning the Count took Valville and me aside, and telling us he wanted to have some private conversation with us, conducted us into his closet; where being seated he shewed us the writings belonging to my father's estate; in which I found that tho' a considerable part of it went with the title, yet I should receive a fortune in money and lands greatly superior to Valville's. Here, niece, said the Count to me, you see the estate you were born to enjoy, and which you have hitherto been deprived of; I have possessed it for many years, and therefore you may make a demand upon me for the produce of your rents ever since my brother's decease; but I am persuaded from the amiable character I have heard of your humanity and greatness of soul, that you will not insist upon all the arrears which you may claim as your due. I have lived in a manner suitable to the estate which I thought had been my own, and therefore am unable to answer such large demands, without bringing inevitable ruin upon myself and family. Here he paused, and I turned my eyes towards Valville, who in the same instant met them with a glance, which seemed to desire me to follow the generous sentiments he observed in my looks. Sir, returned I, immediately, (for these glances, which conveyed our thoughts to each other, were over in a moment) my uncle has before mentioned this to me, and I thought he would have told you my

my resolution; which is, that I will never, if I can help it, give you any reason to repent your knowing me. I would not for the world occasion you or your family the least uneasiness; I readily throw up all such claims as you mention; and am sincerely sorry that you can't know me without losing part of your estate, and will therefore give you an acquittance for all the sums you have received upon it, as soon as you are pleased to deliver it to me. What! my dear, cried he with amazement, sure I don't understand you! ——— you can't mean it ——— have you considered what you say? ——— Yes, Sir, returned I, smiling, I don't desire any of the arrears which are due to me. I shall have enough without them, and therefore am resolved not to accept of any thing from you which would be a prejudice to your family. You have hitherto laid out the profits of the estate in a manner that reflects a glory upon yourself and name, and it would be barbarous in me to take what would give you reason to regret the tenderness you have shewn for the unhappy and the miserable. My dear, returned he, it is impossible for me to express my surprize at your generosity; I neither expected nor desired you to carry it so far. I can spare you fifty thousand crowns without any inconvenience; and this I must desire you to accept of, since it falls very short of the sum which I am indebted to you. No, Sir, returned Valville, you must not expect that Marianne will recede from her resolution, since it is to oblige a person for whom she has such a great esteem; I approve of her sentiments, and must join with her in desiring you to lay aside these thoughts. But all our arguments could not prevail upon him, they rather strengthened his resolution; so that I was at last obliged to accept of notes for the money; this done

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he went to fetch me a box of jewels which belonged to my mother.

As soon as he was gone, I took the pen and a sheet of paper, and wrote as follows.

“ **T**HESSE notes I present to my dear cousins,
 “ daughters of my honoured uncle Count
 “ de V——, as a testimony of my early af-
 “ fection to them, which I desire may be equally
 “ divided amongst them, as they come to age, or
 “ upon the day of their marriage.

MARIANNE.

VALVILLE seemed much pleased at this thought; but as I was sealing up the notes in this paper, we heard the Countess's voice, when listening I heard her go with the Count into the next room, which was only divided from that we were in by a slight partition, so that as they talked pretty loud we could understand almost every word they said. What! Sir, cried she, refuse to accept of fifty thousand crowns! 'tis hardly to be believed: I was afraid your niece would have insisted upon having all that the law would allow her; but how did her lover look? did not his countenance shew his discontent? No, not at all, returned he: there was nothing but joy and satisfaction spread over his face; and his eyes told me, that my niece's behaviour gave him an infinite satisfaction. Well! said she, they will force me, I find, to love them in spite of myself, tho' I have not been able hitherto to look upon them without uneasiness, as imagining that this discovery would entirely ruin the fortunes of my children. I am glad for the poor dears sakes they would not accept of the money. What do you mean? replied he: as I can very well spare that sum, I could not help pressing

pressing my niece to accept of it; gratitude, honour, and every consideration made me resolve to take no denial; at last I was so happy as to prevail, and have therefore given her notes for it——

How! sure you have not been so weak, cried she; I am amazed at your folly! how many of our nobility would have sold their country for such a sum; but you have a greater regard for your niece, than for me and my family! They knew, I suppose, who they had to deal with, and behaved accordingly. Their generosity was only a pretence to ingratiate themselves into your favour, that they might accept of it with a better grace. Madam, returned he, you use me very ill; but I can't wonder at it, since you can injure, by your unjust suspicions, persons to whom you are under such surprizing obligations. I love you; you know I do; and I have the greatest tenderness for my children; but these affections shall never corrupt my integrity, or make me guilty of an action unworthy of a man of my quality; these last words methought were delivered in a tone that expressed a noble kind of pride, and a dignity of soul truly great; but he no sooner said this, than he entered the room to us with some disorder in his looks, when after paying me some compliments, he presented to me a casket of jewels, which he told me had been my mother's; I received them without hesitation, and returned him a great many thanks. He then took a chair and sat down by me, when observing the small packet I had just been making up, which I held in my hand, he asked what it was. It is, Sir, said I, a present I would make to my cousins, your daughters, to buy them some baubles when they come of age, or against their marriage; you will be so good as to keep it for them. But you must not take it ill, that I have reserved

reserved nothing for your son; since I have not omitted the young gentleman out of disrespect, but only from a consideration that his fortune will be much superior to theirs, he might perhaps be above accepting presents from me. Well, Miss, returned he, I see you are resolved to lay us all under obligations, and to do it too in a manner peculiar to yourself; for you have already much obliged my children, by your generous behaviour to me; but may not I know what it is that you have here inclosed for them; let it be what it will, it must be a very acceptable present, as it comes from you, and I will have them called in to return you their thanks. You are at liberty, Sir, returned I, to satisfy your curiosity, since I find it would be painful to you to forbear. Here he broke open the packet, and immediately cast his eyes upon his notes, when turning to me with an air of surprize and pleasure, My dear niece, said he, I should be much more astonished at your behaviour did I not know you to be my brother's daughter; for notwithstanding the great resemblance between you and my amiable sister, you are more like him than her, since you have his soul, as well as her lovely form; his solidity as well as her delicacy of sentiment. But as it must be agreeable to you to hear the character of this great, this generous man, I will in a few words give you such instances of it, as must fill you with admiration, and render his memory still more dear to you.

My father, who sincerely loved his children, took care to give us all a very liberal education, every way suited to the greatness of our family: my two brothers and I began early to be united by the most generous friendship: a friendship of greater force than all the ties of blood: as our inclinations were the same, all our diversions, and amusements
were

were so too ; so that we became inseparable ; and might have continued so, had not I, by the heat and extravagant madness of youth, been drawn to commit such follies as not only insensibly weaned from me the affections of my brothers, but at last exasperated my father to such a degree, that he resolved to disinherit me. Your father used all his endeavours to reclaim me ; and with the tears in his eyes frequently laid before me the stupidity of my conduct, but I was too far gone to hear reason. One day my brother was sent for into my father's closet, when the good old man desiring him to sit down, took hold of his hand, and gave him a look, which he afterwards told me pierced his very soul ; My dear boy, said he, I am very sure thou art sensible of my affection to thee and thy brothers, which has been so equally divided, that I have not known who has had the greatest share in my heart ; I have flattered myself that you would have all been the delight and support of my age ; the perfect unanimity and concord that have been preserved amongst you, have given me a satisfaction which you can form no idea of till yourself are a father. But alas ! how are my hopes vanished ! your brother, child, your brother will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. I have done my endeavours to reclaim him——but in vain——his conscience makes him fly from me——his father——as if he thinks me his enemy ; he fears my reproaches, but does not fear to deserve them. Oh how little does he know the yearnings of heart that I feel for him !——When I consider what he was and what he is now, all the father rises in my soul, and I feel my resentment mixed with tenderness and pity. What a degenerate age is this, in which rapes and adultery are called by the specious name of gallantry ; in which every debauch

is fashionable, and virtue represented as only fit for those queer fellows who are unqualified for society ! I have now no hopes left of reclaiming this undutiful son, and have therefore resolved to punish him, by casting him off. I will make a new will, and give that part of my estate which I intended for him, to thee ; but I beg when he is in want, thou wouldst remember he is thy brother.

HERE your father cast himself at the old gentleman's feet, and lifting up his head with the tears streaming from his eyes, Dear, Sir, cried he, let me on my knees beg you would remember that he is still your son, your once dear son ; what can you hope for by driving him to extremities ——— Arise, arise, cried he, interrupting him, and giving him his hand, I have considered him in that light till he has almost broke my heart. Had he my whole estate he would squander it away, and therefore what I now do, will only make him unhappy a few months sooner than he would have rendered himself so. I have now sent for an attorney, and will this day reward your affection to me, as well as let him know what it is to injure the tenderness of a father. Perhaps this step may reclaim him, and then I shall gladly receive him again to my favour. My brother again interposed, but to no purpose ; my father was inflexible, and my brother went away full of grief at the misfortune that was fallen upon me. Impatient to find me, that he might impart to me the troubles of his heart, he sent his servants to seek me, and went himself to take a walk under those tall elms you see there behind the garden, whose melancholy shades were proper to sooth his affliction. Mean while returning home from a debauch which had detained me all night, I was told my brother had enquired for me,

me, and after searching for him some time, found him walking there in a pensive manner, with his arms across, and his eyes fixed on the ground. I flew to him, impatient to learn the cause of his uneasiness; the noise I made awaked him from his revery; he turned, came back to meet me, related all that had passed, and represented his grief in such lively colours, that I began to pity him and abhor myself; but could not be prevailed upon to forsake a beautiful creature whom I had provided for. The will was made that day, which excluded me from possessing any part of my father's estate. And a few weeks after the good old man sunk under the weight of his uneasiness, which was too great for his age to support.

I now began to sink into despair; my mistress was denied to me, and would not give me an opportunity to see her; when stung with shame and grief at the reflection of my past conduct, I privately retired to a small town where I was unknown, and endeavoured to get a commission in the army, but as I wanted money all my endeavours were ineffectual, so that I was soon reduced to want and misery. I now looked upon myself with horror, reflected on my father's tenderness, and the pains he had taken to reclaim me, with confusion, and continually reproached myself with being the cause of his death. The friendship that had subsisted between me and my brothers, and all their tender admonitions, had now such an effect upon me, that I looked back upon that virtuous union, with regret; wondered how I could forsake that happiness for the mad tumultuous joys of vice and folly, and was almost ready in this last extremity, to fly to them for succour; but was restrained by conscious guilt and shame.

THE young Count (my eldest brother, and your father) had no sooner taken possession of his estate, than he made it his business to search for me, and at last got information not only of the place of my retreat, but of almost every circumstance of my repentance; and immediately sent his servant with orders to ride post to me with the following letter.

“DEAR BROTHER,

“AS you had reason to believe me sincerely
 “sorry for my dear father’s severity, you
 “ought not to have given me the pain of hiding
 “yourself from me, at a time when it was in my
 “power to soften the rigour of his resentment.
 “I have this moment been informed of your
 “situation, and can’t help letting you imme-
 “diately know the joy I feel at the delightful news
 “of your reformation. Oh that my father had but
 “lived to see this change! he would then have
 “died with comfort. I have found amongst
 “his papers a will that was made when our friend-
 “ship, and his affection for you, were at the
 “height. Had he lived to see this happy day, he
 “doubtless would have gladly restored you to his
 “favour, and have given you the same part of
 “his fortune, as he designed to do when you had
 “never offended him. I therefore think myself
 “bound to do it for him, and have accordingly
 “sent you the writings which your return to
 “wisdom and virtue give you a just claim to.
 “——— Let me see you as soon as possible,
 “which will be the greatest satisfaction to

“Your affectionate Brother,

De V——.

“P.S.

“ P. S. I have inclosed a note for a sum which
“ I hope will be sufficient to pay what debts
“ you may have contracted, and defray the
“ expence of your journey, which you need
“ not return me till it suits with your con-
“ veniency.”

IT is impossible, my dear niece, to give you an idea of the greatness of my surprise and admiration, at reading this letter: I could hardly persuade myself but it was all a dream: I read it over and over, while my heart swelled with the most warm and greatful affections. How lovely did this noble act make him appear! what a superiority did it give him not only over me, but the rest of mankind! I could hardly help persuading myself, that he was some superior being, some guardian deity. Virtue now had a thousand graces hitherto unobserved; it appeared all lovely, all divine; I hasted to Versailles, and was received with open arms by my brothers. But when I would have thanked your father, my gratitude arose too big to find utterance in words; I could only press his hand, and tell him that my full heart thanked him, tho' my lips refused to do it. Come, come, man, replied he laughing, and giving me a tap on the shoulder, don't talk of thanks with such a solemn face; let us have no more on this subject; my brother and I rejoice equally to see you thus, and are resolved to shew the world, that for once brothers can be friends, and sincere ones too. You must now see that I have done you justice; here are the two wills, this gives you an estate, and that takes it from you. Well, then, cried your uncle, suppose we should shew our resentment against this last testament, (which has been so prejudicial to our friendship, as to make you fly from us)

us) by committing it to the flames. 'Tis generously spoken, returned the Count: you are willing then to give up the right you now enjoy of possessing my estate, if I should happen to die without an heir. Yes, cried he, that I will most heartily; and would do much more for such a brother. Here I embraced them both; and the last will was accordingly, after I had read it, thrown into the fire.

WE now became better friends than ever; my brothers virtues were ever before my eyes; I aspired to be like them, and cherished the noble seeds they had sown in my breast. Your father soon after this happy meeting married a most accomplished lady, and in less than a twelve month, you were born as a pledge of their mutual tenderness. About the same time my younger brother thirsting after glory bought a commission, and has served almost ever since with great reputation in the army. But alas! the Count's joys were of short duration, since in less than three years after your birth a period was put to his felicity in this life, and that of his lady's.

I HAVE now given you, my dear niece, continued he, a short sketch of your father's virtues, and the obligations he has laid upon me to revere his memory. From this you may form an idea of the greatness of his soul, and the resemblance you bear to him in the divine part of his noble character. I am under the greatest obligations to you both, nor can I help being surprized to find in you, who have never been so happy as to copy any part of your conduct from him, the same dispositions which distinguished him from the rest of mankind. Happy is the father who has such a child! But there is one thing that I ought to add to complete the character I have attempted to give you of this great,

great, good man, and that is, that his benevolence was unconfined and diffusive; and he was looked upon as the father of all the miserable and distressed.

I LISTENED, Madam, to this short history of my father's life, with a great degree of pleasure. The repetition of these heroic virtues, in a person whom nature had rendered so near to me, fired my heart, and filled me with a laudable kind of vanity, and yet at the same time I could not help lamenting his loss, and shedding some tears at the reflection that this dear and valuable man was deprived of life, before I had the happiness to know him. Methought I should have embraced him with a transport of joy, as soon as I had been able to thank him, for this generous behaviour to my uncle, and was sorry that I had never had an opportunity of doing it.

As soon as the Count had done, and I had thanked him for his pleasing story, Valville made some very just reflections on the nature of true greatness, and proved that such godlike dispositions render a character more shining than that of the greatest heroes who have only fought for glory, however great may have been their success. It is the rectitude of the heart, and the truly benevolent disposition of the mind, said he, that constitutes a great character; for the man who is so disinterested, as thus to sacrifice private advantages to the good of others, would doubtless from the same motives, give up his life and all that is dear to him to save his country.

THE Count now proposed our joining the rest of our friends, imagining that Mr. de Rosand and his brother, would not be pleased at being so long deprived of our company; on which we arose, and went to look for them, but were told that those

those gentlemen were gone to take a walk in the garden; Valville and I resolved to follow them, while the Count went to have some discourse with his lady. We rambled about till we got out of sight of the house, when my dear Valville looking round, and seeing no body near enough to observe our actions, took hold of my hand, kissed it, and with a tender air pressed it to his bosom; then fixing his eyes upon mine, cried in a moving tone, May I not prevail upon you, my dear, to hasten my happiness? since it is in your power to render me completely blest, why do you delay it any longer? I long to call thee mine, and hardly know how to wait till the six weeks are expired. Here, happening to look up, I observed the gentlemen we came out in search of; but as I was not now so impatient to speak with them, as I was a minute before, I whispered Valville to be silent, and we both hastily turned down another walk, and ran so fast that we soon got out of sight again, without their observing us. When I had recovered my breath a little, I don't question, Sir, returned I, but you have guessed at my reasons for deferring our marriage: you now know who I am, and are satisfied as to my birth and family, which makes any further delay needless; but yet I can't think of its being near without feeling some kind of uneasiness; my heart flutters with some little painful apprehensions; but however I won't let these groundless scruples have any great effect upon me, and will therefore refer it to you to fix on the day of our nuptials——O my dear, then, cried he, let it be to-morrow. No, Sir, returned I, disengaging myself, that will be too soon; I can't resolve upon being so very hasty; besides we must make some preparations; nor am I yet fixed whether it ought to be celebrated here or at Mrs. Dor-

sin's.

fin's. It shall be where you please, my dear, returned he ; tho' I fancy the Count won't part with us till we are married : we will send for Mrs. Dorfin, and whatever friends you please to invite ; and as for our clothes, I will give orders for them to be made with all possible expedition : you agree to this, my dear, don't you ? Yes, Sir, returned I, but I think I should rather chuse, that our nuptials should be celebrated at Mrs. Dorfin's, I shall be more at my ease there, than with the Countess ; however I must be ruled by my uncles.

AFTER some further conversation on this subject, we agreed to look for our friends whom we had purposely avoided a little before, and therefore turned back to the walk where we had discovered them ; but not seeing them there, we went in, and found them waiting for us in a parlour facing the garden, with the Countess dowager, the Count, and several persons of quality, some of my father's and mother's friends, who were now come to pay their compliments to me. Amongst these was a lady who at first sight caressed me with an air of much friendship, and whose behaviour was too engaging, not to prejudice me immediately in her favour. This was a person who had been my mother's bosom friend, and the same lady that had made me a present of my head-dress, which had been the means of the discovery of my family. But I shall forbear giving you a portrait of her person, or the qualifications of her mind, since that would be needless, after I have told you it was the Marchioness de R—— with whom you are perfectly acquainted.

DINNER was hardly over, when I was agreeably surprized with the arrival of Mrs. Dorfin, and Miss de Fare, who were too eager to share

in my happiness to stay till they were sent for. Their company, you may imagine, Madam, was a very high satisfaction to me, as I wanted such friends of my own sex, as I could be perfectly free with, whose advice I might ask on a hundred occasions; for I could not help feeling a little reserve, and being under a kind of restraint with people, whom I had but just come to the knowledge of; but methought I now began to breathe a little more freely, and really the sight of them gave a surprising addition to my happiness. Valville put me in mind to consult with them about my clothes, I did so: several tradesmen were sent for; and after a long dissertation upon dress, in which all the ladies bore a part; we at last fixed upon some very fine silks, laces and cambrics, which were ordered to be made up with all expedition.

THE next morning Valville and I went out of mourning for my dear mother; when the Count proposed our going to court, which was immediately agreed upon, and as soon as dinner was over, we dressed as gay as possible to make our appearance there. The Countess, who now began to look upon me with a favourable eye, resolved to accompany us; but it was with much difficulty that we prevailed upon Mr. de Rosand to do so. As I entered the palace-gate, I felt an unusual tremour upon my spirits, which I found encrease upon me every moment; however we went on, and the cheerfulness I observed in the countenances of those about me, alleviated a little this disorder. I found the eyes of every one fixed upon Miss de Fare and me, as we passed along, in a manner that discovered their admiration, and even heard several whispers from gentlemen who passed by us, which were too agreeable to escape unobserved. But we had no sooner entered the anti-chamber

chamber, than I observed a plain elderly gentleman stop the Count, and shake him by the hand with a very friendly air: they whispered something together, and then came up to me, when I was surprized to find that this person was the prime minister, who would have forced me to marry Villot, and who at last was so affected with my behaviour, as to declare that he could not help approving of my mother's affection, and my lover's passion. He saluted Valville and me in a frank and obliging manner, congratulated us upon our happiness, and the discovery we had made, and even offered to introduce us to the royal presence. We thanked him, returned his compliment, and accepted his obliging proposal, on which we immediately followed him, tho' I trembled so that I was hardly able to walk. We found his Majesty talking to some persons of quality; and so engaged that he did not see us, when the minister and the Count went up to him; but they had not left us many minutes, before we observed that on a sudden all eyes were fixed upon us, and methought their looks seemed to single out me. On which the Count came to us, and let us know his Majesty desired to speak with us; at this we all moved forward, and Miss de Fare and I threw ourselves at his feet, when with a gallant air he offered us his hand to help us up, gave us a salute, and after some compliments upon our beauty, welcomed us to court, and did Valville and Mr. de Rosand the honour to kiss his hand.

I HAD now recovered myself so far as to be able to take notice of the magnificence that every where surrounded us, in this palace. Several of the nobility who seemed to take a pleasure in hearing themselves say, what they thought fine things, where continually buzzing in our ears discourses

upon the pretended conquest we had made of their hearts, and a thousand little soft, tender, silly things, which were uttered in a manner as gallant and fluent, as if they had incessantly repeated the same smart things; as indeed it was their custom to do so to every lady of tollerable beauty. We should have been very glad to have dropped this troublesome company, but we found it impossible; for they were resolved, as Miss de Fare and I had never been at Court before, to shew us every thing worthy of admiration, tho' we had no need of their assistance, since my two uncles were as well acquainted with every thing of that nature as they could be.

AFTER we had viewed the curious paintings in the gallery, as well as the most magnificent of the apartments, we agreed by common consent to take a turn in the garden; where every thing appeared new to Miss de Fare and me, and I could not indeed restrain the admiration that seized me, while every thing I saw was a new subject of wonder and surprise. The grotto, the triumphal arch, so richly adorned with marble statues, that seemed endued with all the powers of intellect and passion; the cascades supported by satyrs and cupids; the ships, barges and yatches in the canal, and among the rest the man of war which I think they told me carried fifty guns, was a very agreeable sight to me: nor indeed was I less delighted with the fountains, particularly that of Neptune and the sea-nymphs, and those of the fables of Æsop. Struck with a profusion of delight at the sight of such triumphs of art, I was at a loss at first how to make known my astonishment, and could only express my wonder by my silence; but Valville told me that even that had a voice, which plainly discovered all my sentiments; he had his eyes con-

continually fixed upon me, and seemed more delighted at the dumb satisfaction I discovered, than if I had given it words. But at last my ideas of all these harmonious dispositions, this scene of wonders were disconcerted by a sudden gust of wind, which brought such a whirl of dust in our faces, as was very troublesome to us ; this gave me a disgust against the walks, which were so far from being ornamental, that a little wind rendered them quite incommodious.

BUT admiration, Madam, is perhaps one of those sensations, that is of the shortest duration ; the most wonderful and astonishing pieces of human art soon grow familiar to us, and even upon a second view lose a great part of their striking beauties ; thus I have since enjoyed the same objects a hundred times, without the least part of that agreeable astonishment which they at first occasioned.

As we now thought it time to return home to the Count's, we took coach ; and the gentlemen, who had hitherto attended us, left us at liberty more freely to enjoy our own reflections. As soon as we were seated, Mr. de Rosand, Valville, Mrs. Dorfin and I, who filled that lady's coach, entered into a general conversation on the beauties of the place we had left ; when after we had freely given our opinions of all we had seen, Mr. de Rosand made some excellent reflections on the infinite disproportion there is between the finest and most curious pieces of human art, and the common mechanism of nature. This introduced some pleasing observations upon natural philosophy, which the old gentleman managed in such an agreeable manner, as to render his discourse equally entertaining and instructive to us all. But I must proceed.

THE next morning, soon after I was dressed, I heard somebody rap softly at my chamber door, and upon opening it, was surprized to see my dear Valville richly dressed in the clothes that he had ordered to be made for our wedding. I am come, my dear, said he, as soon as he saw me, impatient to let you see that my tailor has been as expeditious as if he too had been spurred on by love, and to let you know that there are several persons below, who wait to try on your clothes. How! returned I secretly pleased, have you been able to prevail upon them to do impossibilities? I did not expect that my clothes would be tried on these two or three days at soonest; it was but the day before yesterday that we employed them. O my dear, returned he, love and gold can do wonders. I then went down, and was soon dressed in a manner more gay than I had ever yet been; and to deal ingeniously, I never in my life appeared more agreeable in my own opinion than I did now. I had often thought that I had conquered every degree of my natural vanity; but I soon found myself entirely mistaken: my heart beat with a quicker motion under these rich brocades, than under a plain silk or a sable mourning; and this I dare say, at once made my eyes sparkle with an additional lustre. But who is she that can pretend perfectly to know herself? we judge of our hearts by our present disposition, and since these dispositions are almost infinitely various, no wonder that we have not always a command over ourselves. My afflictions and the many mortifying circumstances I had gone through, joined to the examples of my excellent and dear mother and Mrs. Dorfin, you have perhaps imagined, had perfectly killed this folly; and I should have thought so too, but, alas! I found I was a mere woman still,

still, and far from being above the little foibles of my sex. A large glass, in which I viewed myself at my leisure from head to foot, conspired against me, and even said as many flattering things as the persons about me, or at least persuaded me that all they uttered was strictly true. The Countess now said many obliging things to me, and I was so pleased with the justice that I thought she did my charms, that I began to feel a real friendship for her. For the pleasure, Madam, that attends self-applause, is so very sweet, that whoever inspires it by teaching us to be pleased with ourselves, gains the readiest access to our hearts, the surest way to our affection. This we find from daily experience to be strictly true; for whether this self-complacency be laudable or not, whatever contributes to it, inspires the most flattering and insinuating, tho' not always the most reasonable pleasures.

BUT a mere accident soon checked my folly, and brought me to myself; for going afterwards into my apartment, in order to look into a portmanteau which I brought from Paris, for something I wanted, I happened to cast my eyes upon a paper which I had by mistake put into it; which as soon as I opened, I found to be one of the letters my dear mother had sent to me while I was in the convent. This sight in a moment gave a turn to my passions, and at once melted me into a bitter softness; and indeed I now felt a more solid delight in indulging my tears, than I had before done in all that folly which had just swelled my little proud heart. The reflection of her humility and condescension made me now blush with shame; how ill, cried I, do I imitate her lovely example! and how far fall short of attaining to her virtues! I amused myself for a long time with these thoughts;

and hardly recovered myself, when a servant came to tell me that dinner was on the table. I went down, and by degrees resumed my usual gaiety.

BUT now the time, from whence I am to date my happiness complete, approached; for not only Valville and Mrs. Dorlin, but my two uncles, Miss de Fare and the Countess joined, while we were at dinner, to persuade me to give my hand to that dear man the next day; and as I had no material objection, I could no longer refuse it, tho' I felt in granting this request a painful kind of timidity, which struggled with my love, and made me at the same time wish and fear the same thing. I longed to call Valville mine, and to reward his tenderness with an unreserved affection; I longed to let him see that my whole study was to render him happy; but yet the step I was going to take never appeared of such importance as it did now. The change in my life, that I was suddenly to undergo, appeared the more surprizing the nearer it approached. However, I endeavoured to overcome this thoughtfulness, and to seem as cheerful as ever all the rest of the day, and while we were at table, the glass went gaily round to our mutual felicity. But at night I could not close my eyes; I no sooner laid my head on my pillow, than I began to revolve in my mind the various incidents of my life, from the first moment in which reflection began to dawn, and of which memory had retained but faint and obscure traces. At first I considered myself as sporting amidst silvan scenes, endued with native innocence, and happy amidst my childish amusements and rural pleasures. Then as growing up to riper understanding, and equally improving in wisdom and folly; listening to the instructions of my kind benefactor, and attending to

to those who flattered my growing vanity. Then again in that humble state, receiving the caresses of that dear lady Mrs. de Rosand, or walking with her and her brother in their garden, or thro' the adjacent fields, and hearing their tender admonitions and pious lectures, while my imagination painted the well-known landscapes before my eyes, the happy scenes of innocence and peace! Then I surveyed the many calamities, joys and pains, the strange vicissitudes of misery and felicity, that had since been my portion. Here the most sensible grief, there smiling joy; here unutterable anguish and despair, there hope and comfort; here every mortifying circumstance, and there exulting in transports of delight, or calmly blessed in a happy tranquility. These reflections took me up some hours, when at last casting a glance forward to the rapturous hopes that lay before me, I cried out in a low voice, O my God, from what miseries, from what scenes of complicated distress hast thou relieved me! how often have I been sinking into despair!——Oh what gratitude is due to thee! Now I am to spend my life with the dear object of my tenderest affections; may no unforeseen accident blast our felicity!——O thou most benevolent being, render this union propitious! bless this dear man, and may we ever be the objects of thy care, thy esteem and approbation.

THUS did I employ my thoughts till the morning began to dawn, when a soft slumber stole upon my senses, and hushed them into calm and peaceful dreams, from which I was at last awakened by Mrs. Dorfin, who, wondering that I did not come down to breakfast, came to tell me it was ready, and that they only waited for me. As soon as I heard her rap at my door, and call me by my name, I rubbed my eyes, started out of bed and

let her in ; when after merrily chiding me for my slothfulness, she wished me joy of the happy morning, congratulated me on my approaching felicity, and told me she hoped that to the last day of my life, I should look back upon this with the most lively pleasure and satisfaction. I thanked her for this compliment, and immediately began to dress me with all expedition, when she told me that the Countess's woman had been several times to listen at my door, in order to dress me ; but hearing no noise they all began to fear that I was indisposed. She added that she would ring the bell for her to come now ; but I entreated her to forbear, and desired her to stay with me till I was ready to go down, which she readily consented to.

As soon as I was ready, I went down with Mrs. Dorlin into the parlour, when all the company saluted me, and gave me many obliging compliments, and in particular the Countess's dowager my grandmother, who clasped her feeble arms about my neck, called me her dear child, and said such tender kind things, that the tears started into her eyes. Valville's countenance at the same time sparkled with joy, every feature in his face expressed his contentment, and when he told me that he thought himself the happiest person upon earth, his full heart seemed to say so too. But nothing affected me more than Mr. de Rosand's behaviour, who having saluted me, and taken hold of my hand, began a compliment, too tender for him to utter : the soft swelling of his heart stopped his voice, some affectionate drops rolled down his cheeks, when he turned away his head, and sat down abashed and unable to proceed.

As I desired that the marriage should be performed as privately as possible, we invited nobody but those friends of our family, whom I was already
ready

ready acquainted with; the day, however, was spent with all imaginable mirth and gaiety; but it was a mirth untainted by that obscenity, which upon such occasions is too often looked upon as the very quintessence of wit; for nothing was said in this polite company, which the purest and most perfect modesty might not bear without a blush. Our dinner was very grand, and indeed perfectly elegant, and while we were at table, we were entertained with a fine concert of vocal and instrumental music, performed by the most skilful masters that could be procured. When this was over, play and dancing were proposed, and we fixed upon the latter; but my thoughts were so taken up with the importance of the engagement into which I was entering, that I hardly knew what I did; they saw my disorder without seeming to do it; and endeavoured only to bring me to myself, by diverting me and fixing my attention upon other objects. Valville frequently took me aside, and endeavoured to raise my spirits, by saying all the tender things that love could dictate. About ten at night we all went into the Count's chapel, which was finely illuminated with wax-candles; my heart here fluttered afresh, I trembled, and my concern increased to such a degree, that I hardly knew how to behave. The ceremony was at first proposed to be performed by Mr. de Rosand, but upon his declining it, we unanimously agreed that as he had hitherto discharged the duty of a parent, he should stand in that character now, and the Count's chaplain discharge the office of the church. The solemnity of this sacrament filled me with a surprizing kind of awe, (for I was never in my life more pious) and increased my confusion to that degree, that I hardly knew how to proceed; but it was no sooner over

than I began to recover myself; my heart in a moment became less heavy, and I received the caresses of my friends, with a pretty good grace. A sudden kind of joy seemed at once to diffuse itself thro' my soul; Valville, said I to myself, is now mine; for ever mine; and I can have no reason to fear being happy, since that depends entirely upon myself; entirely upon a heart so well disposed to render him so. What felicity may I not expect from an unreserved conversation, from the tender endearments of this dear amiable man!

WE now received abundance of congratulations and warm wishes for the long continuance of our mutual joys, which lasted till we sat down to supper, where Valville and I were agreeably surprised to hear a very fine epithalamium sung to soft music, which we afterwards found was wrote upon this occasion by Mrs. Dorfin and Miss de Fare.

AFTER supper, the ball continued till about twelve, when the gentlemen and ladies accompanied us to our apartment, and after the usual ceremonies retired.

THE next morning we arose to breakfast, and again received the caresses of our friends, who, by a charming vivacity and lively conversation, endeavoured to disperse the natural confusion, which I knew not how to disguise; but I was not in a disposition to enter much into the conversation, till Mrs. Dorfin mentioned Miss de Terviere, and desired me to favour the company with her agreeable story, since none but Valville and she were acquainted with it. This I looked upon as a very kind effort to bring me to myself, and therefore readily complied with her request; but first proposed, as it was a very fine day, that we should remove to the summer-house in the midst of the garden, which was surrounded on all sides by a
thick

thick grove of trees. There said I we shall breathe all the fragrance of nature, and if I should be a little flat in the repetition of the history of this charming woman, the pleasure we shall receive from the situation of the place, will render my impertinence the more tolerable. We shall all chuse to be where it is the most agreeable to you, Madam, returned the Count; but the pleasure we shall receive from hearing you will admit of no addition. Here we all arose, went into the garden, and took our seats in that agreeable little building, when I began this affecting history, to which they all listened with the greatest attention. When I had done, all the company expressed their concern for the poor unfortunate lady; and Mr. de Rosand made the most severe reflections on the conduct of the abbess, who, he said, had behaved with greater inhumanity than any of her relations, since she had rendered her miserable without a possibility of redress. We now agreed to walk on the parterre till dinner; but we had no sooner opened the door than we heard the bells from several neighbouring steeples, which made us all imagine that the marriage was made public, and indeed this was not a groundless supposition; for dinner was no sooner over, than the porter's whistle informed us that company was at the gate, which proved to be several persons of quality, who came to congratulate us on this happy occasion. But their conversation was far from being agreeable to me, in the present disposition of my mind; however I was obliged to bear with it.

ABOUT a week after this, we resolved to return home to our country-house near Paris; but as we were preparing for our short journey, a messenger from court came for me, and told us that the queen desired to see me. I was much
alarmed

alarmed at this order, but immediately prepared to wait on her majesty, and went attended by my dear husband and the Countess. We were received with much affability and good humour, and after a little discourse on indifferent subjects, her majesty desired me to wait on her to her closet, where having made me take a seat, I have heard, Madam, said she, much discourse concerning some remarkable passages in your life, the whole of which, they say, has been very singular, and therefore have the curiosity to desire to hear a particular account of it from your own mouth. I am afraid, returned I, your majesty will find very little entertainment, from the low scenes in which I have been engaged; but I think myself greatly honoured by your condescending to hear me talk to you of myself, and will therefore immediately obey you. Here I related the most remarkable parts of my story, only disguising a little some part of Mr. de Climal's behaviour, and forbearing to mention Valville's infidelity. Her majesty seemed extremely delighted with my narration, and as soon as I had done, made some very warm encomiums on my virtue; told me that there were few like me at court, and that she would find out some way to let me see that she had a real esteem for me, and then permitting me to kiss her hand, gave me leave to retire. Valville and the Countess I found waiting full of expectation for my return, and after they had enquired what had passed, conducted me back to my uncle's.

WERE I writing a novel or romance, I should perhaps, Madam, according to custom have left off at our marriage, since all the pleasing scenes which arise from tender distress, are supposed there to have an end. The professed enemies of that state, indeed will tell you, that however desirable
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it may appear at a distance, a husband and wife are the most flat and insipid creatures when together of any in the universe, and in short, that they have nothing to expect but a dull round, a continual repetition of all that is disagreeable. But believe me, Madam, this is mere common-place declamation, and has not one word of truth in it: the happiness of the marriage state is more uniform, but it is not on that account less exquisite. It is not often so full of changes as the single state, but that may be because our felicity arises nearer to perfection; and this is a good reason why I now pass swiftly over the incidents that have happened between that time and this. But so much for digression, now to return to the thread of my story.

Our departure was now put off for a day or two longer, but as nothing material happened in this interval, I shall pass it over till we came to our villa near Paris, whither we were attended by several of our friends. There we kept open house for several days. The morning after I arrived there, I made some excuse as soon as we had breakfasted to retire from the company, that I might be at leisure to indulge a crowd of reflections which forced themselves upon my mind. I am now, said I, (as soon as I was alone) happy in the possession of my utmost wishes; but the continuance of these blessings in a great measure depends upon myself; for that sweet harmony of sentiment, that union of soul, and all those dear tender sensations, which unite me to my husband, must ever render us worthy of each other: but will no gloom ever overspread our minds; no clouds obscure our joys? Ah! what must I do to preserve his affection, and keep alive that tender friendship which is the foundation of all my future hopes? Beauty is but

a slender tie, and can charm only for a moment ;
——— what then must be done ? ——— he must
ever think me his friend, and that I am most sincerely : friendship is the most lasting bond, and surely it is the only one that can render our union indissoluble. While I was thus employed in endeavouring to fix upon some principles, that might enable me to behave in such a manner, as to render myself ever agreeable, Mrs. Dorfin came to me and desired that I would freely tell her, what employed my thoughts. I did so without scruple ; when taking a chair and seating herself by me, My dear, cried she, smiling, this concern is both the highest instance of your affection and prudence ; for nothing can now be more worthy of your thoughts, or of greater consequence to yourself and family. As all your happiness depends on the tenderness of your husband, to preserve that is a care worthy of your highest ambition ; for this you should still dress, and make yourself appear as lovely as possible, that he may still admire you, and others approve his choice. Some of our ladies are no sooner married, than they lay aside all attempts to please at home ; if they dress it is not for their husbands ; as if they would appear to all besides gay and lovely, to him alone disagreeable. They behave as if they thought their point was gained ; and all attempts to appear in a graceful light to him were now unnecessary. This shocks his natural delicacy ; and it is no wonder, that she who once appeared almost divinely charming to the admiring lover, sinks in his esteem when she thus degrades herself ; for the transition is too great to fall at once from an angel to a flattern. In the marriage state there are a thousand nameless decencies to be observed ; these will even render your wit more pleasing, give a grace to your ordinary behaviour, and make the
most

most trivial actions appear lovely. You will, my dear, added she, forgive my saying so much on this subject, since it is a fault that we are apt to overlook in ourselves, tho' it be of the greatest importance, and since so very few take care to observe this undescribable elegance of behaviour.

BUT this, my dear, continued she, is not all: as he has justly a very high opinion of your wit and fine sense, you should take great care to preserve that too; you must read in order to retain a fund of pleasing and judicious ideas. This will make him ever consider you as a dear and valuable companion; he will then hear your voice with transport, and always find a new delight in your company: you will then have none of those heavy stupid hours, in which life flags and seems at a stand; for while you don't want subjects to enliven every moment, you can never experience that lethargy of being, which arises from the dull conversation of two persons whose minds are exhausted, and who are obliged to be either silent or impertinent, for want of new ideas to entertain each other. O how happy will Valville find himself, when he sees you always capable of filling up the serious as well as the gay and sprightly hours of life! What an inexhaustible pleasure must he find in the conversation of a wife whose charms are ever new; whose wit is ever sparkling; whose delicacy and tenderness appear in her whole behaviour, and whose mind and person are both employed to preserve his love and esteem! he will feel a happiness unknown to friendship itself; a happiness that will exist even beyond the charms of youth and beauty. The joys you thus inspire, will reflect back upon yourself with a double brightness; thus, my dear, the good sense of each, with complaisance and tenderness,

ness, will render you mutually charming, mutually blessed.

HERE Mrs. Dorfin ended, when I thanked her for her advice, and told her that I resolved to follow it in every particular. And then we agreed to re-join the company.

As we now became settled in our family, we chose Mr. de Rosand our chaplain, which was an office that he accepted of with the utmost pleasure. But as Mr. de Valville thought it would be ungenerous to lay a gentleman under any restraint, to whom I was under such infinite obligations, he chose instead of a salary, which might be taken away at pleasure, and implied a kind of dependence, to settle upon him a pretty estate, which would have maintained him in a very genteel manner, had he been entirely at his own expence.

WE now went frequently to court, it being removed to Paris, and about three months after marriage, Valville was made Count de G——, which was an honour conferred upon him, thro' the interest of the Queen and the prime-minister; for her Majesty had conceived a singular affection for me, from the time that I was introduced into her presence; and the minister had a very great esteem for us both. But this honour could make no addition to our happiness; which before this arose to as great a height as possible, and was now settled into that calm and peaceful tranquility, which is the summit of all human felicity. Innocence, truth, a mutual forbearance, and a reciprocal desire to please, made our time pass on with an unruffled serenity. We have had no separate desires, no contending interests. Our friends are such as reason approved, persons of a fine taste, an excellent understanding, and perfect enemies to slander and defamation; the blackest,
but

but yet the most fashionable of all vices ! My dear husband's humanity, affability and tender sense of his fellow-creatures, fill us with that joy and inward delight, which naturally accompanies the exercise of those human and generous dispositions, when exerted upon proper objects. What greater happiness is human nature capable of ? what more exalted pleasures can fill the mind of man ?

WHEN we had been married about a year, I was brought to bed of a fine boy ; a happy pledge of our mutual love ! Now new sensations arose in my mind, new pleasures and new pains ; for the wider the mind is expanded, the greater is our capacity for affliction and distress. I have since this, had three girls and a boy ; but tho' I have been so happy as to bury none of them, yet there are a thousand little tender cares and fears, as well as pleasures, which a parent feels that are unknown to all the world besides.

ALL our little offspring have the same place in our hearts ; our earnest endeavours are to inspire them with an early love of virtue ; to represent it to them in its own amiable and attractive light ; to give them betimes every wise and noble sentiment, and to direct their unexperienced minds to a generous love of their country.

THUS, Madam, I have finished the task you enjoined me, with all the freedom of a sincere friend. I have laid open my heart before you, and discovered all its foibles and imperfections, without the least fear of injuring myself in your esteem. I am now heartily weary, and shall therefore without ceremony conclude, and lay aside my pen.

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